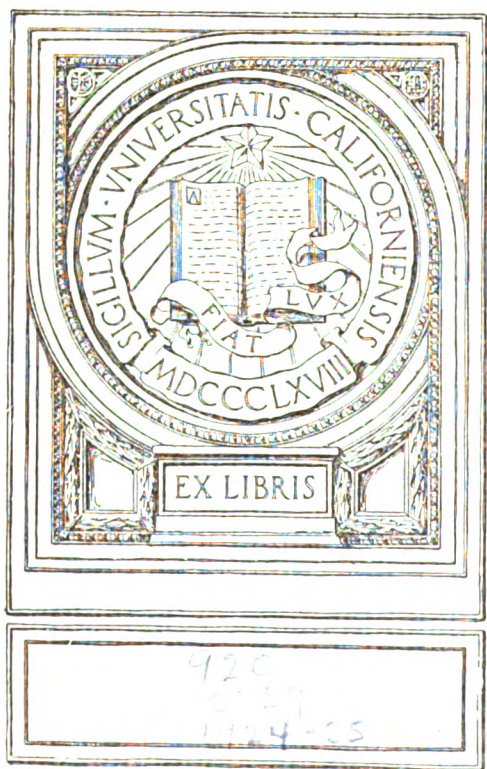

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**THE BEST CONTINENTAL SHORT
STORIES OF 1924-1925**

BY RICHARD EATON

**MUSTAPHA KEMAL
UNDER THE RED FLAG
PIONNIERS OU DEMENTS
MASHA**

THE BEST CONTINENTAL SHORT STORIES OF 1924-1925

AND THE YEARBOOK OF THE
CONTINENTAL SHORT STORY

EDITED BY RICHARD EATON

Editor of
"The Best Continental Short Stories of 1923-1924"



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PREFACE

Generalities, like statistics, are usually logical but they are often erroneous. To summarize in a few lines even some of the most universal characteristics of the contemporary short story in twenty-odd countries is as difficult a task as the description of the similarity of languages represented in the Tower of Babel. Nevertheless, there are certain generalities about Continental literature of 1924-25 which have the double merit of being logical and at the same time, exact.

One finds throughout European literature of 1924-25 and particularly in the short story which is perhaps the most exact reproduction of political feeling, an affirmation of the old Italian saying: *Non ricordar il capestro in casa dell'impiccato*. (Do not talk of the halter in the house of the man who has been hanged.) Throughout contemporary literature there is a pronounced absence of naturalism. Allegory and fantasy have assumed a rôle far more important in the creation of the short story on the continent than in the United States or Great Britain. It is as if the authors sensed vaguely the world weariness of strife and of hatred and sought in some measure to attain an imaginary Utopia. The public has apparently lost interest in the vital naturalism of Schnitzler and of Gorki. Sometimes this aversion to drama does not seek a substitute in allegory. There has likewise been a marked increase in short stories dealing with children, as for instance in the "Youthful Athenæum Days" by Baekelmans which is characteristic of this tendency. There are, of course, exceptions to every fixed rule. "Jerzy" by Grubinski affords an excellent example but even in the case of Grubinski who has imitated rather successfully the Grand Guignol type of literature, there is a marked novelty. Grubinski has chosen a juvenile character for the chief figure of his dramatic story.

One of the most remarkable books of short stories is

that of Signorina Pettini, one of which has been translated for this volume. It was first published in a small edition inasmuch as Signorina Pettini was practically unknown in the Italian literary world. Her success was immediate and as startling as many sudden events in Italy. Her sense of dramatic values and her keen appreciation of the construction of the short story shows her to be perhaps the most successful new writer of short stories in Europe.

I trust that my readers will bear in mind the enormous difficulties incident to the compilation of this volume and hence in considering the literary value of certain stories translated for instance from the Lettish or from Finnish that it has been necessary to translate the stories first in German or Swedish and then into English. The question of choice of short stories is likewise extremely difficult. There is an abundance of material in the case of certain nations which renders the selection of one story always open to question. Other countries afford so little choice that it is none too easy to find even one story worthy of the title "best." I have been guided therefore in my selection not only by the usual standards of unity, construction, style, interest, and completeness of plot, but likewise by a consideration of the customs and intellectual development of each nation.

"The Yearbook of the Continental Short Story," which represents the bibliography of this volume, is necessarily incomplete, since it includes only those works which either one of my assistants or I have read. I should be greatly indebted if the various publishers and editors of magazines whose names are not included in the "Yearbook" would forward to me in care of the Credit Lyonnais, 19 Boulevard des Italiens, Paris, copies of their magazines, books, or catalogues in order that they may be inserted in future volumes.

R. E.

**THE BEST CONTINENTAL SHORT
STORIES OF 1924-1925**

THE SUNKEN HOSTELRY

By PAUL ZIFFERER

THE Austrian hostelry, or inn, which gave rise to so much talk toward the end of the last century in connection with the strange event which is about to be recounted still again, had nothing whatever in its outward appearance to suggest anything odd or peculiar. On the contrary, it appeared quite like any simple and ordinary public house of the everyday and commonplace type. It was a little retired from the main artery of travel and sought a support against one of the large stone piers which sturdily prop up one of the familiar bridges connecting the two banks of the river Danube. It might be rightly said that the little inn crouched, in fact, beneath the roadway in shyness, and as if it were deprecatingly begging pardon for its bare and plain exterior. Its framework was of simple planking. Tiny indeed did it appear when contrasted with the great, sweeping arches of the bridge at whose base it nestled. Some giant seemed to have spilled it from his box of toys and then to have forsaken it for more urgent affairs.

However, the inn was by no means sad and gloomy, for all its overshadowing by the ponderous bridge above it. Many a gay occasion had it known, and especially during the pleasant Austrian evenings, when the sun was sinking, as it were, straight into the Danube, and the wavelets on the river's surface seemed as if moulded in bright silver and copper, from the very last scattered, outlying dwellings of Vienna clear to the foot of the Leopoldsberg. For at evening all the mill hands left their work and sought their firesides. And on their way there lay before them a little flight of stairs, leading up to the bridge from the little retreat wherein the inn hid itself away in the shelter of the big stone pier. Many a workman, thinking of the stairs to climb and the long pathway across the bridge in

store, halted at the inn to fortify himself for his long walk with a mouthful or two of something strengthening.

As the weary laborers quaffed their liquor, the old inn-keeper sauntered thoughtfully back and forth among the simple benches in the tap room. He wore a dazzling white jacket and about his waist was tied a blue apron, with which he wiped now and then the sweat from his brow when his labors waxed hot and heavy. Such was always the case on Sundays, for then the inn sounded gayly with music, usually supplied from the whining accordion, but occasionally from a real violin.

This odd landlord, whose unusual ways caused so much gossip, was a queer old customer about whom many tales were bruited abroad. He himself, to be sure, kept a close tongue in his head and certainly never ventured on the rash proceeding of taking any of his guests into his confidence. For that matter, his appearance was stern and forbidding enough to repel the most daring inquirer. His outer shell was hard, dry and not encouraging. His name was Athanasius Bierhanzl, but his neighbors and customers called him Satan among themselves, on account of his dark and gloomy visage. Some said that he had been married but was separated from his wife. Others declared that he was an ungodly monk who had assumed the cowl only to forsake it for some buxom wench or other. It was unmistakably true that the Honorable Athanasius Bierhanzl, alias Satan, was much crosser and more ill-favored toward the girls who resorted to his inn than to the sturdy young peasants who accompanied them. He had a habit of frightening them almost to death. Whenever he happened upon a belated pair of lovers exchanging whispered confidences on one of the benches outside his inn after business hours were over, he drove them, terror-stricken, away from the premises. The stories of Bierhanzl's oddities by no means paled as time went on, but continued to assume ever-growing values year by year, especially as his beer was far and away the best in the place and he retailed a wine whose delicacy could be matched in but few hostels of all the country round. Moreover, in a big, padlocked box which was kept under water,

he maintained a stock of wonderfully fine carp. They could be seen lazily swimming to and fro whenever a customer would give himself the trouble of peeping through a little hole to choose one for his meal, the prices corresponding to the sizes of the fish selected.

All these things made the repellent manner and the queer whimsies of the host something to be accepted as oddities inseparable from his wares. In fact, these very oddities were often considered as still other specialties of the house, for they were the source of all sorts of entertaining gossip and scandal which, as amusement, could be lumped together with that supplied by the whining accordion and the poor, maltreated violin.

The secretive, close-mouthed ways of the good Athanasius Bierhanzl were highly appropriate for the queer background of the very queer old inn. The rain, however, which was such a good thing for other public houses, was no friend of his. It fairly drove the customers into the welcoming houses of other landlords, but it pitilessly routed the most hardened devotees which Bierhanzl possessed. And heavy rains caused a very unwelcome guest to knock loudly at his door. This rude visitant was the Danube River. Whenever it was swollen with heavy rains, which poured the rising streams into it from all the country round about, the old river would surely visit Herr Bierhanzl. It ordered no beer, it threw the tables and benches all over the house, and spilled out choice liquors at its own sweet will. It extinguished the fire on the hearth, it rendered all the drawers impossible to open, and rose even to the roof. At such times, the house sank out of sight. Herr Bierhanzl bore no grudge against the elements, however. He was not in the habit of bearing grudges to pay off. He knew things could not be otherwise and felt that the Danube was naturally unintelligent. For days at a time the inn might lie buried in the river. When the rains were over and the sun came out, its ridgepole would be visible, sticking out of the water and looking like a floating buoy. After a while the windows would appear, and then the door, and finally the benches and tables could be seen, lying about and drying in the sunlight.

The whereabouts of Herr Bierhanzl during the drying-out process remained a mystery. If he were asked about it, he merely gave his head a few sad shakes. One was tempted to think that he sank from view with his house and came up with it out of the water. For it was hardly out of water before its master could be seen walking forth from the door, dressed in his shining white jacket, and with his blue apron round his waist. He cleared the water out of the house, helped the deaf servant Walpurga, who attended to the kitchen, made the fire, and greeted the first returning guests with a silent nod.

Those first to return were usually Dr. Karl Gasteiger and his friends of the boat-club. They called themselves "The Vikings." Dr. Gasteiger had organized this club and had also designed the lovely and highly elaborate "V", embroidered in pink on the club-members' rowing togs. The face of the chief Viking, Dr. Gasteiger, was similarly pink. It was never tanned by the sun. Its tint was that of a young sucking-pig, or like the color produced by stirring a drop of blood in a bowl of milk. His official colleagues—for Gasteiger was fellow judge with the lawyer Foltin—called him a "pink blond." Every one chaffed him on account of his fondness for the sport of rowing. He did not give free rein to this passion. He was of slender build, rather narrow in the chest, and rowing tired him out. But he loved the feeling of power that the exercise imparted.

The chief of the Vikings sat for an hour, bent over a law on penalties which had been given him by Lawyer Foltin, for his examination. The case to which it applied seemed of no special interest. A police officer, as protector of public morals, had confiscated a colored print of Venus Anadyomene, displayed in the show window of the Sirota bookstore, the proprietor of which was now charged with indecency and an offense against public propriety. The public prosecutor demanded the destruction—Gasteiger termed it the hanging in effigy—of the amorous goddess who shared the guilt of the bookseller who had exhibited her. Poor Herr Sirota was convicted in advance. His shop had often contained obnoxious printed matter, and

his illustrations, engravings and pictures were not always limited to the severer aspects of pagan mythology. Many of these things had been mercilessly destroyed. The Herr Doctor Karl Gasteiger could see no better fate for the Venus Anadyomene.

The official remembered, from things learned during his school days, that the Greek words "Venus Anadyomene" meant "Venus born of the sea foam." These memories were curiously linked in his mind with his very present memories of the sunken inn below the imperial bridge and its mysterious owner, Athanasius Bierhanzl, alias Satan. It seemed to him as if this Venus, so marvelously born of a penal regulation as well as of the ocean spray, ought to aid in unravelling the diabolical existence of the Danube innkeeper, as if, in fact, she might be its prime cause and its final solution.

He dreamily considered these possibilities as he turned over the dry legal reports and regulations, though finding in them very little to support the new idea he wished to try. The legal complaint contained a description of the reprehensible print and gave details concerning the artist Stradella who had created it. The artist was a descendant of the adventurous musician Alexander Stradella who, in the seventeenth century, had seduced a girl betrothed to a well-known Venetian and had fallen a victim in Genoa to hired assassins.

The painter Stradella seemed to resemble his ancestor. One day he would be in Vienna, another nowhere to be found. He came and went at his own sweet will and nobody knew much about him. It was not clear how the print of the Venus had made its appearance in the book-seller's window, for no copies of it existed. The artist must have destroyed his plates, as gossip had it that he had a habit of doing.

While the address of the state prosecutor was dully resounding, the print of the Venus lay directly in view of Gasteiger. The woman whom he beheld rising from the waves was, in fact, marvelously beautiful. She was wringing the water from her hair. In the background there was a landscape of green hills and the president of

the boating-club of the "Vikings" thought that the picture showed the woods about Vienna much more than it did the isle of Cytherea. The president seemed almost to recognize the very waves of the print. He would bet his head that they were those of the Danube, and not at all the billows of the Ionian seas.

By this time the public prosecutor had finished his speech. He had summarily condemned the poor, innocent goddess, whose whole being reflected immodesty and shamelessness. She constituted a mockery and ribald reproach of all honesty and propriety. The prosecutor made all the haste he could, for he did not wish to tax the patience of the court, who manifested several signs of weariness. Judgment was rendered, in scarcely ten minutes, that the goddess must be destroyed. Gasteiger thought of her as of one condemned to death.

Two weeks later, as Gasteiger was lazily following with his eye a sunbeam which had strayed through the office window, he began to wonder whether old Satan, who worked about boats during leisure moments, would not be willing to make a few little repairs on the club boat, so that it could be used immediately. As he was so reflecting, Foltin, who sat nearby, making notes on his dry old cases, suddenly remarked, "By the way, Doctor Gasteiger, nothing has been done yet about that Venus picture. You might as well arrange with the prosecution for destroying it."

Gasteiger ceased his reverie. "Ah, yes—she must be destroyed," he stammered.

"Yes," resumed Foltin, "you can take a look at the accusation if you wish."

Gasteiger removed the waxed paper in which the goddess was enveloped, and sighed as he did so. Then he started out on the long trip to the prosecutor's office.

"Ah, it's you, my pink blond," said the prosecutor's representative, as he offered the chief of the Vikings a cigarette. "How's the boating?" Then, after learning of Gasteiger's mission, and seeing how reluctantly he was following court orders, he said, with a smile. "Oh, you can destroy the picture yourself, and in any way you like, my pink blond. I leave it fully to you. Only, don't

take it home with you, for somebody might hear about it and I might have some difficulty myself." Thereupon he stuck another cigarette in his mouth, asked Gasteiger for a match and, as his eye fell upon the picture which Gasteiger held in his hand, he laughingly commented, "That water nymph there is just the one for you, Gasteiger!"

As Gasteiger reflected on various means of destroying the goddess, he asked himself if his job really included the execution of criminal goddesses. He might burn the picture, but his house was now heated by a general apartment apparatus and he had neither stoves nor fireplaces. He might tear or cut it into fragments, but the goddess looked out at him with a lovely smile, seeming to say, "Do it if you can!" As he took up his scissors, indeed, it seemed to him that a cut would be followed by a spurt of blood, as if the poor goddess were thrown beneath the knife of the guillotine, and he stayed his murderous hand. Now he regarded the smiling nymph, and then his glance fell upon the blue waves about her which were bathing her white form. An idea suddenly occurred to the Vikings' chief, and he remembered the coming boat trip. By Jove, the trip was for that very afternoon! It was devilishly late already. He must hurry. And he thought that he had found the very fate for the Venus Anadyomene, who was still smiling mockingly at her executioner. Why not the Danube? He could sink the Venus in the Danube this very day. And he imagined that a real celebration could be made out of it. The Vikings' boat could set out on the funeral ceremony at night, all decorated with torches and Chinese lanterns.

A coffin for the goddess was readily found. A heavy, iron-bound box had rested for ages behind the old wardrobe in Foltin's office. The box bore a complicated snap-lock. It had once contained dynamite and had figured in a long since forgotten political trial. It was rusty, worthless, an incumbrance to every one, and its destruction had been vowed for many months, only the office janitor feared the "anarchist box," and had left it alone where it was. It was now only junk, a nullity, in legal terms, rejected by every one because nobody wanted it.

Gasteiger had only to slip a coin into the janitor's palm. "All right, Herr Doctor, chuck the old thing in the Danube if you want to," said the janitor, for he was aware of Gasteiger's boating hobby. He could not read Gasteiger's inner thoughts any more than he could see the lovely face of the Venus, which Gasteiger had concealed under his arm.

It took a little time to arrange for the goddess' burial in the Danube. The true Vikings gathered about their leader and swore secrecy to a man. They would say absolutely nothing about what they might hear and see on the fateful evening. They lured the only woman member of the club, the dark Fini, away with a false telegram. Gasteiger slowly withdrew the goddess from her wrapping of waxed paper and held her aloft so that the astonished members of the club might have a good look at her. The iron-bound "anarchist box" was then placed in the boat, filled to the brim with stones so that it would surely sink. Gasteiger tenderly laid the goddess on top of the stones, enfolded in the waxed paper, which Gasteiger carefully sealed. With an apt comparison to his comrades of the Nibelungen treasure, he suggested that perhaps some day some worthy hero might fish out the Venus from beneath the waves. The engineer Radinger then securely closed the lock and assured himself that the box was water tight, and that it would surely keep the picture from escaping.

All this was done in the evening, and in the absence of the old Bierhanzl, the old Satan, the old devil, whom nobody wished to place confidence in. The time preceding the final rites dragged all too slowly by for the Vikings. At the inn, old Bierhanzl seemed to inspire silence even more than ever before. At supper, just before the embarkation, old Satan must have had his suspicions aroused by the altogether unwonted moroseness and dullness of the Vikings, who ate their meal with scarcely a word and hastened away at a signal of their leader, just as the sun was dipping behind the Kahlenberg. As they departed, the innkeeper shook his head forebodingly after them.

A short time later, though, he must have been indeed astounded to behold a spectre boat mounting the stream, bearing the forms of the Vikings which were visible in the

red glow of torches and Chinese lanterns, which made the drops of water falling from the oars glitter like drops of blood. The melody of the old students' song, "The boozier must die," very familiar to the innkeeper, first rang out over the water. This was followed by a lusty choral, "Poor Venus must die, the maid so young, so young, so young." And, in the middle of the river, where it was very deep, and where the water swirled in a whirlpool as though it were sucked in by an eternally thirsty dragon, the boat remained for quite a while almost motionless, held in place by the efforts of the Vikings' noble oarsmen.

Bierhanzl, the old Satan, now noticed for the first time a dark mass lying in the bow of the boat. The engineer, Radinger, whom Bierhanzl readily identified by his vigorous figure, was applying himself to this dark object, while the other Vikings splashed the water about with powerful strokes of the oars. The water splashed up in a fountain, and a sound like an immense sigh arose, as the heavy, mysterious lump was thrown overboard. The boat was violently rocked, but the clear and rather feminine voice of Gasteiger was heard uttering an order, then all the oarsmen backed water, and the boat began to glide downstream.

Herr Athanasius tremblingly wiped the sweat from his brow. He could not believe his own eyes. He felt that he had beheld the commission of a frightful crime. However, it never occurred to him to notify the police or call for aid. He was accustomed to the coming and going of strangers. They came to his little wooden refuge time and time again. They wandered forth on unknown quests, only to reappear when least expected. His life was no concern of theirs, nor were their lives and fortunes of the least interest to him. He was occupied enough with his tiny dwelling, that stood on the margin of the ever menacing river. He didn't care what people saw or heard. He was gruff and avaricious. He minded his own business. He told his customers as little about his affairs as he bestowed upon them his scanty store of wealth.

With rigid, unwavering gaze he now looked over the water as if its waves might bring him help and counsel. Then he cast loose a tiny skiff, rowed over to a little islet which was

near the spot where the curious object had been deposited, made the skiff fast, removed his clothing and dived head first into the river with a force and skill which nobody would ever have supposed that he possessed. In spite of the strong current, he finally touched the iron-bound box with his hand, after protracted and heart-breaking efforts, and not without lacerating his flesh against the iron lock.

Breathless, panting, tired out, Herr Athanasius Bierhanzl returned to his inn. He had to give up all idea of salvaging the iron box, though he tried it after nightfall many times. He cast evil glances on his guests, the Vikings, when they now paid their score. With a gesture of menace he now fumbled in the big leather pocket at his waist, as if about to draw forth a pistol for the avenging of a misdeed of which he knew nothing, but suspected much. However, all that came out of the pocket were the nickel and copper coins with which old Satan made the change, thrown by the host ringing clear upon the table.

One day, however, when the Danube was again overpowering the house below the bridge and had finally released the roof, windows, doors, benches and tables, poor Herr Athanasius Bierhanzl felt an access of violent wrath. As he was estimating the damage done his little property by the fierce blows of the Danube's waves, he suddenly noticed his fish trap, which had been broken and in which the only fish were now miserable little dace, instead of the fine carp of yore.

Inside the trap, though, he spied a box covered with green river weeds, thrown up by the raging stream as a toy might have been thrown. Satan leaped upon the wonderful treasure with a cry which was almost bestial. His glance roved happily and thankfully over the river's swelling waves. The Danube had granted his secret desire and freely brought him the treasure from its depths as a gift.

Bierhanzl dragged the coffer across the sand to a little bend, where he could conceal the box among reeds from the curious vision of any unwelcome guests who might happen along. Then he feverishly attacked the devilish fastening which still guarded the mystery from revelation. His eager wish to have the lock open rendered him nervous and awk-

ward and his hard, clumsy, workman's fingers groped and felt here and there for a long time. At last the lid of the box suddenly flew back with a startling jerk.

Herr Athanasius Bierhanzl suffered the shock of disillusion on finding only a heap of stones so firmly cemented together that the depth of the box seemed a mass of concrete and, on top of the stones, the picture of the pagan lady wrapped in waxed paper as in sackcloth and ashes. He had formed no definite idea as to what might really lie within the box, but his astonishment could not have been greater had the box contained jewels, costly gold and the wealth of Golconda instead of the stones, and a living woman ascending from the casket in flesh and blood as from a mysterious cavern, instead of the simple picture.

His vexation soon passed, however, and his mood became even rather softened and a little joyful as his glance rested upon the seemingly worthless gift which fortune had thus bestowed upon him. He, Herr Bierhanzl, who was so utterly removed from sentiment of any kind, actually experienced a strange emotion as he looked upon the Venus, born of the spray and foam. Old memories stirred within him. In the features of the goddess he recognized, as in a mirror, the lineaments of his wife, who had been the fateful influence of his life. He saw again her small, laughing face below the great plumed hat, just as she was when she went away one Sunday with the rich butcher, who had waited for her on the corner with a fine carriage. At that time Herr Bierhanzl had a good business and fine custom, but all this disappeared after his wife ceased to occupy her place behind the grill of the cash counter. It had been rumored, later, that she had drowned herself. When this news was brought to him, Herr Bierhanzl took refuge in the little wooden house beside the Danube to wait for his wife. He had no very definite ideas, and had never thought of receiving good fortune from the river. He only knew that he wanted his wife again, living or, mayhap, dead. And now at last his faithless companion had really returned and was asking for forgiveness, gay, lovely, unreal and as alluring as a dream.

Herr Bierhanzl at first thought of tenderly preserving the

picture in the little wooden house, but then feared that it might not be clean and good enough. Moreover, covetous glances might fall upon the picture and covetous hands steal it away from him. In such surroundings he could not be fully sure that she would remain with him. He therefore hid the picture away in a chest, concealed the latter in a thick growth of reeds and closed his inn early, so that, at night and by bright moonlight, he might steal to the chest like a thief and look at his treasure trove. Below the picture was inscribed the word, "Anadyomene." Herr Bierhanzl spelled out the queer, hard word, whose meaning he did not know. Its mystery puzzled him and strengthened the supernatural effect which the picture had produced upon him.

He utterly forgot that he had beheld the very coffer which was brought to him by the friendly river deposited in its depths, and right before his eyes, by the band of Vikings. That event lay behind him and seemed now only a dream. Only the resurrection of the goddess close to his little inn seemed reality, and happy reality. In his confused state of mind, he somehow felt that ghostly beings were taking charge of his fate and a feeling of solace and gratitude almost overcame him.

He threw himself down before the picture and kissed it passionately again and again, laughing and weeping in turn. His loud, uncontrolled laugh frightened him. He was greatly astonished to find tears in his eyes, again finding a way down upon his hard, weatherbeaten face.

The Venus, who thus remained Herr Athanasius Bierhanzl's secret guest, completely altered his manner of life. He, who had hitherto brought to his daily tasks a gruff, harsh and forbidding aspect, now caught himself humming a little song which he had known in his youth. The frequent repetition of this little song fairly astounded his guests. Hitherto, he had thought only of the money he might make, now he suddenly sallied out and bought a new apron for Walpurga, the deaf kitchen-maid. Fraülein Fini, the only lady member of the Vikings club, found one day to the amazement of herself and all the other Vikings, a great bunch of wild flowers by her plate. A strange, new joyous-

ness had come over Herr Bierhanzl, the man who had been for so long gloomy and alone.

He kept his secret well, however, but now sought companionship and cheer. When his guests came in and left he heartily shook their hands, nodded his head at them, and laughed aloud when one occasionally chaffed him. He asked permission to sit down with the Vikings, he touched glasses with them all, took a place close to the chief, Dr. Gasteiger, and exchanged lively talk with him. They conversed about worldly doings, women and all sorts of things, and he had a feeling that both he and Gasteiger had something in common at the backs of their heads which neither one wanted to express in words.

Meanwhile, the new behavior of Herr Bierhanzl, which was as remarkable as his previous gruffness had been, did not especially please his customers. They had all got used to his grimness, and now his inexplicable joy seemed unreasonable. His laugh, no less than his frown, was misinterpreted. Many a man whom he cordially welcomed abruptly turned on his heel. Business began to fail again. The fish often got burnt in the cooking since deaf Walpurga had received her new apron, the temperature of the beer was never right now, and even the wine ceased to please. The guests said that the Danube had leaked into the cask.

The customers gradually took to quenching their thirst on the other side of the bridge. Radinger, the little engineer, one day made all the Vikings excited with the news that he had discovered another inn not far away, where the host had no oddities and where there were boatmen who could repair their boat, an occupation which Bierhanzl had sadly neglected. So the summer wore away. The accordion and violin were silent, guests at the inn were very few, and what few there were had small patience. Everyone said that Herr Bierhanzl had sold himself to the devil. Venus Anadyomene was again meddling with the old innkeeper's existence.

The autumn finally came on. Deaf Walpurga was now employed somewhere in the city as scullion. One morning, Herr Athanasius stood in his doorway, completely deserted. The rain now fell heavily during the night and the Danube

swept by morose, gray and hostile. Still the first, the only, thought of Herr Bierhanzl was: the picture. Whenever the stream dashed its stormy waters high against the pier of the bridge, Bierhanzl, before looking after his house, always ran first to the reedy bend on the river bank where Venus Anadyomene lay in her box. He always rejoiced as he found the coffer still secure.

Now the autumnal storm was becoming much more violent than usual. It whistled over the Danube and bent the willows and young birches, which swayed anxiously in the fierce blasts of the wind. The waves rose high, crept up the river bank, and leaped wildly shoreward. The water oozed out of the soil as blood might ooze from a thousand pores. Unsuspected springs overflowed the earth, the air was filled with murmurs and hissing, and with loud roars and splashes made by the wind and water. Never had Herr Bierhanzl, in all his long experience by the river's brink, beheld such terrible weather. He now waded knee-deep in water, yet the latter rose ever higher and higher, finally reaching his breast. The space formerly occupied by the little bend in the bank was now a wide and deep stretch of water as far as the eye could reach. Herr Bierhanzl, now swimming, now diving, explored the place as best he could. The jealous river, which had cast the goddess forth on land had now taken her again unto its bosom.

All at once the poor old innkeeper felt himself within the grasp of a powerful whirlpool, and drawn into the roaring Danube. He was sure that his last moment had come. His entire life passed rapidly before him in review. The events which he had known had never before appeared so clearly. The happenings of every year revolved before his eyes, filing before his inward vision like the familiar scenes of the river and of his home. He beheld himself as a youth, wearing his waiter's jacket, his white napkin under his arm, leaning in dire weariness against the table, watching the clock on the wall as the head waiter counted the money and a belated guest ordered beer. Then, in place of the guest, there stood his mother, calling to him.

How far away all that was! He tried to recall his mother's given name, but could not. Perhaps she had had

none. Perhaps nobody had ever said a tender word to her, any more than they had to him. Now he perceived his faithless wife, as she was when she had smiled at him for the last time, beneath her big plumed hat—no, that was not his wife, it was the goddess of the picture, emerging from the waves and beckoning to him. He saw that she was far off, he tried to reach her, he could not allow any one to deprive him of her again, and, groping about him, one of his feet impinged against a firm object.

He felt this object with his hand and recognized an iron-bound corner of his casket. Bierhanzl realized at once that he could not remove the box. The Danube would not surrender its property so easily a second time. Perhaps he might at least get the picture! The lonely old fellow felt new courage, as if imparted by the presence of the goddess. He had become familiar with the mechanism of the lock, and was able to throw himself upon it, wildly. He opened the box by just a chink, inserted his hand, seized the waxed wrapping in a flash, but—his hand stuck fast. Every attempt to strain, pull and wrench proved vain. His bleeding wrist was grasped as in a vice, as if held between the teeth of a hungry monster.

Herr Athanasius Bierhanzl was found, thus imprisoned by the iron-bound box, when the Danube yielded up the old inn, as it had done so many times before. First the roof appeared, like a floating buoy, then the windows, next the doors, and at last only the benches and tables were missing. The stream had carried them away. The old man, though, did not come forth, as usual, and so people began to search for him. The Vikings and their chief, Dr. Gasteiger, led the search. They discovered the lifeless body of the old man on a little sandbank out in the river, close to the heavy, iron-bound box.

For a good long time after that, fishermen along the Danube's banks recounted that the evil old innkeeper had been caught by the devil in the act of pilfering concealed treasure. The gold which the wicked man had thought to steal had been turned into stones. In his hand was the very parchment, badly soaked and wrinkled, upon which his bargains with the devil had been recorded. Not a trace

of the record remained, however, and there was absolutely nothing visible except a faint stain colored a faint, delicate pink, like the tint of a fair woman's flesh.

THE STRANGE ADVENTURE OF MR. ARCHIBALD HETT

By S. DELHAYE

THE strange adventure confided to me by Mr. Archibald Hett during our crossing together will make you realize that we are not always responsible for our sentiments and that certain apparently ductile wills are occasionally weakened and impaired.

It was eleven o'clock at night. The moon was concealed by menacing clouds, and the dismal note of the fog-horn seemed to draw itself out over the silent, meditating waters, while—as we imperceptibly drew away from the dock—the shadowy forms of the piers and storage-houses would stealthily approach, become fixed and rigid for an instant, and then would glide rapidly away into the night. After a few minutes a gust of wind warned us that the ship had reached the open sea. The clanking roar of an anchor being lowered and the heavy bumping of railway carriages still came to our ears from Southampton, and then—no further earthly sound whatever unless it was the faint lapping of the tiny waves against the side of the ship. . . .

There is nothing more eloquent than the departure of a ship at night. The most positive of mortals feels himself overwhelmed by the symbolism of it all. There is the feverish animation of the immense docks, the sensation of security, the brutal but artificial daylight streaming from the huge electric bulbs and then, abruptly, comes total darkness, the stark uncertainty of the voyage and the invisible, far-off horizon. One keenly senses the full contrast between the actual present revolving about us and the deep mystery hiding our destiny.

Although the waves of hot, fetid air expelled from the engine-room did not tend to make the location a desirable one, I, nevertheless, seated myself on a bench skirting the

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deck. From below me came the deep growl of the feverishly working fly-wheels and connecting-rods. I was already congratulating myself upon being able to enjoy the absolute solitude because of these annoyances, when a man's figure passed by and was lost a moment from view, only to reappear almost immediately and come over and sit down close beside me. My initial feeling of genuine disappointment and resentment was succeeded by one of utter indifference. The man appeared to fall asleep and it was not long before I paid no more attention to him than I did to the coils of rope piled up on the deck or to the collection of suitcases lined up in an uneven row under the air-shafts.

Suddenly I was aroused by the faint rustling of cloth. The man's silhouette stirred and in the flare of a lighted match I was able to distinguish the bony, straight-lined profile of the individual seated there alongside of me. He was lighting a cigarette. I observed him from out of the corner of my eye. Each time the red glow heightened I endeavored to discern the expression in his eyes, which remained obstinately closed as if contemplating some dream deep within himself. When they were finally opened I was impressed by the astonishing brilliancy imparted to them by the tiny glow of a few flakes of burning tobacco.

It was then that the man began speaking in a flat, monotonous tone of voice:

"It is very sad on the ocean at night. . . . Extremely sad. . . ."

I responded to his remark with a mere grunt. My neighbor closed his eyes again as the cigarette flared anew and I waited for him to continue. A few minutes later he flipped his cigarette butt down on the deck where it appeared to explode with a thousand little sparks, and then turning to me he exclaimed:

"Do you frequently travel at night . . . when everything seems so very dismal?"

This abrupt, outlandish question impressed me very strangely. I had the painful impression that his words endeavored to explore my heart in exactly the same way as this stranger's eyes sought to fathom my glance. With an effort I finally managed to reply:

"Yes, occasionally."

The man muttered something deep down in his throat. I realized that he was answering his own reflections, the epilogue to which would be another question. This desire—so contrary to the British character—of striking up a conversation with an utter stranger—an individual concerning whom nothing is known except that he is there alongside of one in the dark, filled with his personal ideas, secrets and possible hatreds—this obstinate desire filled me with a certain uneasiness. An undefinable sentiment of pride held me there in my place, where, willing or unwilling, I was obliged to endure the questions put to me by this strange fellow seated there next to me. Furthermore these questions proved to be but a preface. With a cleverness worthy of attention my traveling companion manœuvred in such a way that, in less than ten minutes' time and without having properly introduced himself, he had enlightened me as to his age, his situation and all those trifling details which enable one to identify an individual. In this manner I learned that Mr. Archibald Hett was the son of a London merchant, that he no longer had any family, and that he had devoted his very large fortune entirely to Science.

"Doubtless you consider yourself as being kindly, just, prudent and energetic," exclaimed this confiding fellow without any previous warning, "but you have none of these qualities at all! Our virtues and our sins are but insecurely established in our souls; circumstances alone develop or stamp them out."

I suggested to Mr. Hett that this opinion of his impressed me as being rather far-fetched and that one could debate endlessly upon this topic which, indeed, was not at all new. But he only replied:

"You are without any experience . . . I am aware of the fact that scholars claim that there is no such thing as a conclusive experience; but scholars utterly ignore the human soul; everything escapes them . . . everything, I say. . . ."

He lit another cigarette and in the sudden, quivering flare I beheld again the straight lines forming his profile and his closed eyes. Blowing the mellow aroma of his tobacco into my face he continued by saying:

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"I considered myself a brave man, Sir; I thought that I possessed great will-power and energy. But such is not the case; I have none of the qualities whatever. I am a weak, cringing fellow like all the rest. Why should I be different from the others? . . . Because I arrived within a few miles of the Pole? Because I penetrated farther into New Guinea than any other white man? Because only three months ago I jumped in a parachute from an aeroplane flying over the port of Sunderland? Because I . . . because I . . . No, Sir, I am not brave and courageous because of all this."

Mr. Archibald Hett concluded his sentence with a horrible, bitter laugh and, touching my arm, he added:

"I don't enjoy this air from the engine-room; if you are willing we will move over to the . . . to the hatchway; there I will explain to you why it is that I am not brave and why there is no such thing as a brave man."

This stranger's voice who was thus confiding his innermost thoughts had become soft and almost sorrowful. He filled me with genuine pity; my previous hesitancy had left me and I was anxious now to learn the mystery which this man was willing and even desirous to confide. Here it is, truthfully related.

"Doubtless you are familiar with London. . . . A sudden shower surprised me as I was leaving the subway station at Tottenham. It was about eight o'clock in the evening. Standing with my back against the front of a house I was waiting for the storm to subside and watching the skidding busses in the distance, when a thin, aged man wearing a tawny overcoat and an old felt hat discolored by the elements tendered me the evening papers. As I pretended not to notice him he insisted, holding out one of the papers in a trembling hand and saying:

"'Come now, won't you please buy one . . .?'"

"I took the *Times* and handed him twopence. But meanwhile the rain began coming down faster than ever. The autos drove by, churning up a stream of water which splattered against their mud-guards. On the double-decked busses the closely huddled umbrellas formed what looked like immense, dripping animal-hides. While shoving my

paper into my pocket, I observed the distressing aspect of this section of the city when the poor old chap again attracted my attention.

“‘Oh! this is fine, this is fine. If everybody would only buy my papers like this I would not be such a miserable—very miserable man. . . .’

“At first I pretended not to have heard anything; but as he insisted I offered him twopence more. This is what caused my misfortune, Sir, for he realized that his distress had touched me. I had not taken more than ten steps along Oxford Street before I was aware of his presence. He would not let me get away from him. Should I have severely dismissed him then and there? He appeared so very miserable, all bent over as he was, with his tawny overcoat and his black felt hat—stained a dirty green by repeated dousings—that I did not have the courage to do so. Before very long he walked directly by my side, so close indeed that occasionally his hand would brush against me and his shoulder—bent by privation—would come in contact with my elbow. A subconscious impulse which sprang from the very best that was in me prevented me from walking any faster or from taking advantage of my strength in order to escape from this man. It is possible that he became aware of my consideration for him, for it was not long before he exclaimed with a sigh: ‘Oh! it’s very kind, very kind, indeed, to walk along so slowly so that old Johnny can keep up with you. It’s easy to see that you’re not from London! They are so heartless, so very heartless in London!’

“While saying this he let out little sobs which were lost in his heavy moustache stained with nicotine.

“A strange uneasiness took possession of me. I sensed that this man had great need of me and that he clung to my footsteps like some drowning man to a spar; it was now quite impossible for me to dismiss him gruffly. However, I asked him coldly:

“‘Where are you going?’

“He stopped abruptly and motioned evasively towards the distance. Then, looking at me with pleading eyes, he exclaimed:

“‘Oh! don’t speak in that way. . . . Don’t speak to old

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Johnny like the others do. . . . You are going to tell them that he can't work any more and that he must not try and sell his papers out in all the wind and rain. . . . I can't tell them all this. . . . Thrisa is so severe, and as for the youngster . . . the youngster would take my last farthing from me. . . .

"Night was rapidly descending—a sorrowful night characteristic of outlying districts filled with shadows and deep suffering. I followed the old man farther and farther. His monotonous complaint was such that I scarcely noticed it any more, but I could not refrain from glancing at this beshrived old man in his tawny overcoat and faded felt hat every time we passed the pools of light formed by the street lamps. But where were we now? Was it not the first time I had ever passed along these deserted streets where the tumult of the feverish main arteries of the city slowly wears itself out? I came to a stop, filled with a sudden, ungovernable fear before this miserable old man muttering his eternal lamentations and all these high, filthy, leperous walls behind which I could picture a world of sin, hatred and low crime. I swear to you, Sir, that I made every effort to escape and that I collected all my energy to convince myself that what I was doing was pure folly and of no earthly use, that I could do nothing for this poor man, of whom there are so many in London. But I was quite incapable of doing so. I fumbled in my pocket and drew out something—a shilling or possibly a crown—which the aged fellow snatched from me without allowing me to escape.

"Oh, no! . . . you must tell them all about it now. . . . You must explain it to them. . . . Only a few steps more now . . . only a few. . . ."

"A yearning to resort to violence took possession of me. It would have relieved me to have beaten this withered, yellow face deeply marked with suffering, but I noticed the old man's tears gleaming in the corners of his eyes. . . . I was powerless, quite powerless to do anything, I tell you! . . . Finally we stood before the door of his house. Ah! Sir, what a miserable house it was! And what a street it was on!

"Without another word the old fellow pushed me into a somber corridor where I advanced, feeling my way along the wall. In places the plaster was falling off and I felt a viscous, clammy moisture dampen my hands. When I reached the end of the corridor my companion led me up a narrow flight of stairs where reigned an unbearable odor of ammonia. It came from a baby's innumerable swaddling clothes hanging up to dry in the room we were about to enter.

"I thought I had sufficient imagination to picture what poverty really means in a large city. But, Sir, I am without any imagination whatever. . . . I ignored what poverty could mean in a large city. Never will I be able to give you an idea of what I saw there! I can only describe to you this woman to whom I was to explain why old Johnny was no longer able to work. She had a pale, puffed face, overshadowed by a mass of reddish, even bright-red hair, which hung down in heavy strands over her ears and neck and even over her green-hued eyes, which appeared to be sightless, so tiny were their pupils. I think that she must have just nursed her child, for one could see under her woolen bodice, greasy, filthy and distended by her ample bosom, the corner of a soiled and patched-up chemise. Near the soap box where a baby squirmed and whimpered, a frail, bow-legged boy was untying some tangled string. He was about ten or twelve years old with reddish hair like his mother. When he moved, casting behind him on the wall an immense, stumbling shadow, I was able to notice the extreme emaciation of his torso, his deformed leg and, especially, his foot whose heel could not touch the floor. With his hank of string between his teeth he approached the old man to feel through his pockets.

"'You see,' exclaimed the aged fellow, 'he wants my money. . . . He takes it all unless I hide it and when I do hide it he beats me. . . . Thrisa doesn't say anything, but only laughs . . . and I can't prevent her.'

"With a quick gesture I turned the idiot away while the woman muttered indistinct oaths.

"'She will beat me for this,' continued poor Johnny. 'She will beat me because I brought you here; at present I am

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safe enough . . . because you are here . . . but later . . . Oh! later on they will avenge themselves for what I have done. . . .’

“I was fairly nauseated by the fetid odor of ill-ventilation, which was barely surpassed by that of the drying swaddling clothes.

“‘You are pale, my kind Sir,’ said the old fellow in a tone of commiseration whose degree of sincerity I could not readily ascertain. ‘You are pale and you have caught a chill. . . . But old Johnny is going to show you that he has a good heart and that he has something excellent with which to warm up his friends when they have taken cold.’

“He had scarcely taken three steps towards the shelf where stood a bottle, corked with a wad of paper, before the woman had jumped to her feet and placed herself between him and the shelf.

“‘Don’t touch that!’ she screamed angrily.

“Her pupilless, blindly staring eyes appeared to me then as socketless and glassy and as desperately turbid as was the room itself where I was experiencing this perfect nightmare.

“Then, as the old man drew back to my side with a haste that was not comical in the least, I can assure you, the young idiot laughed and laughed with his mouth obstinately open and shaking his wad of snarled string like some baby’s rattle.

“I closed my eyes in order to collect whatever strength and determination I still possessed, and, as the old man was still standing close beside me—speechless and trembling—I dragged him out of the room and followed him down the miserable flight of stairs where the unbearable odor of ammonia was still accumulating.

“Could I depart alone? Could I abandon him there in that room? Indeed I was quite unable to do so; he would have held me there with the tears gleaming in the depths of his dim, old eyes!

“‘So you see how it is now, don’t you? . . . I can’t even have the gin. . . . She is the one who drinks poor, old Johnny’s gin. . . . I will tell you everything, kind Sir, everything. . . .’

"We had taken but a few steps along the narrow street when he pushed open the door to a disreputable bar from whose sooty and besmeared windows filtered a few pale rays of gas light. There, while slowly sipping his gin, he explained to me how his son had been killed in a fight with drawn knives at Coalpark. After the tragedy he had continued living with his daughter-in-law, who flogged him in spite of the fact that he alone earned what little money they had.

"'But it is the youngster,' he continued, 'who is the meanest; he always imagines that I hide my pennies. But in spite of everything I am forced to remain. . . . I'm too old! . . .'

"We found ourselves quite alone in this evil place at this late hour. Occasionally the bar man would open the door at the rear of the room to ascertain if we were not going to make up our minds to leave; again he would plant himself before our table with his bottle of gin in his hand and would examine us closely with his queer eyes before refilling my companion's glass. The latter's interminable flow of words mingled themselves in my ear with the memory of the idiot's laughter, the woman's angry cries and the whimpering of the little baby. My head began to swim; the tables, chairs and gas jets began revolving insanely all around me and for a moment I thought I was about to faint away.

"'But wait! you haven't heard anything yet,' continued the pitiless old man letting his hand fall on my shoulder. 'There is still more. . . . One day when there was no more bread in the house, yes, yes . . . she went out and stayed away all night . . . and when she returned she had two shillings. . . . What a shame! All Blackwall knows about it. . . . And yet the Reverend Brown could have procured work for her. But no, it is always up to poor old Johnny . . . always. . . .'

"With this he began weeping. Ah! if you could have seen him cry, Sir! Finally when I sought to take leave of him, exhausted and taken with fits of shaking as I was, you can readily imagine that I was again unable to get rid of him. For an interminable time we walked along together, side by

side. He continued to weep and recount his sufferings, while I felt utterly exhausted and benumbed. . . .

"Finally we arrived in front of my house. Old Johnny did his best to detain me, but I promised not to abandon him and to return again to Blackwall to save him from Thrisa and the poor idiot who was eternally unraveling his wad of string. I swear to you, Sir, I swear to you that I was quite sincere when promising that I would return to protect this feeble old fellow with his poor, shrunken body, his tawny overcoat and his felt hat discolored by the elements.

"Fortunately I slept very soundly that night. When I opened my eyes the next morning I thought that I must have dreamt this awful adventure which pursues me still, and which will haunt me for a long time to come now that I am positive that I did not merely dream about it.

"Now do you understand why we know nothing at all concerning ourselves and that a trifling event is capable—in good as in evil—to so transform our character that we would almost deny our own personal deeds?"

Mr. Archibald Hett ceased speaking. He was now looking straight ahead of him at the harbor of Boulogne which slowly appeared to view from out of the rosy mists of early morn. But in reality did he really see the harbor and the distant town? Was it not rather the sight of old Johnny, Thrisa, the poor idiot shaking his wad of string and the filthy lodgings hiding their common misery that remained obstinately fixed before his eyes . . .?

It seemed to me that the cold increased as we approached the port. Before very long we slipped past the high breakwater, where the form of an English sentinel passed and re-passed in front of a row of cannon. Then came a chaotic heap of crates, the roaring of motors, the shrill blast of whistles and the heavy panting of the machinery.

With a thud we came alongside of the dock. The crowd of passengers hurried to and fro and gathered before the gangways on the port side of the ship. When I in turn had left the boat I discovered that Mr. Archibald Hett had disappeared.

It is exceedingly curious how often I think of Mr. Archibald Hett and his strange adventure. . . .

PIETER AND THE CLOUDS

By ROBERT VIVIER

WHEN Pieter stepped out of his little house, a blue basin in hand, to go and wash himself in the canal, the hard wind of the morning hurled him with a cordial blast against the casing of the door. Pieter's boyish chest gleamed through the bosom of his shirt and rejoiced in the exposure, and he opened his mouth very wide to breathe in the exhilarating freshness of the day.

As far as the eye could see the clouds were so hard, so tumbled one upon another, and in such confusion that it seemed as though some gigantic hand had hurled them indiscriminately into the great reaches of the sky. The sun had streaked them with irregular lines of reddish brown, and their shoulders and backs stood out as though silhouetted against the dark shadows that encircled them. All hurried with a common haste to impale themselves on the high steeples in the distance.

The cows, with an air of surprise, propped themselves on their legs, and the whole field, like a rippling mass of yellow aigrettes, seemed to be flowing over the surface of the earth. The whole land was an uneasy boat that swung and tugged at its mooring. Far up in the sky the opal and iris-hued wood pigeons glided by in a regular squadron formation. Having sprinkled his face at the edge of the canal, a restless body of water which crossed the plain and which the wind blew into ragged tatters, Pieter stood for a moment and looked at the clouds. His brown hands were on his hips, and the basin upside down on the ground at his feet showed a gleaming patch of blue streaked with black, and the checked towel thrust into the side pocket of his velvet breeches flapped like a flag. Then he walked along slowly, clinging to a wire fence as he went. At the end of the fence he stopped and laughed, a laugh that sounded thin and haggard and which the wind snatched from his

mouth as if jealous of the sound. Then he looked at the clouds again. In the cold morning light his face seemed as round and hard as they, and his short-clipped hair stood straight up and reflected back the sun in warm hues of amber and gold.

Where were all these clouds going? They were traveling so rapidly that they would pass Bruges, and they would certainly reach the mountains where there were beautiful churches with tall, graceful steeples, and white, misty waterfalls. Who knows? Perhaps they would go to Rome in one trip without a halt, as those devout persons who carry the bells at Easter time.

Pieter lifted his hands toward the clouds. One of them was coming along very rapidly and traveling very low in the sky, and it called out in a great voice that echoed and reëchoed over the plain, "Jump up, young one." A great blast of wind seemed about to carry away the earth, and all the bushes, losing their heads completely, showed the glistening lining of their streaming skirts, and a flock of pigeons swept by, tossed in the air as leaves of white paper. Pieter hung from the cloud by both hands. In the wink of an eye he saw the little white house, the tiny garden where the heliotropes grew, and his mother at the door, three children clinging to her skirts, and her arms moving like the sails of a windmill. The canal gleamed below like a sword blade of rippling steel. The tall branches of the poplars swept the sabots of the little boy. With a leap the cloud rejoined the crowd of his fellows. And the procession, with gigantic force, rolled on from field to field.

He who carried Pieter astraddle on his neck was a famous old fellow. His curved forehead cut the air like a flail and his shoulders fearlessly rubbed and scraped by those of his comrades. His neck was so stout that Pieter had to spread his legs wide apart and so risked being toppled off at every bound. He crouched down very low and would not have changed places with the Emperor of Germany or the Pope of Rome.

From above, gold and silver rained down on all the rolling backs of the clouds, which were so bathed in light that they seemed to have but just emerged from a well of it.

When he turned around, Pieter saw the clouds creep up the ascent, one pushing the other up from the bottom, and the late comers huddled at the foot in a thick, shapeless confusion. They were completing a journey about the world and perhaps the leaders were already behind—scolding and exhorting the laggards—after they themselves had made the circuit by China and the two Indies. The clouds were singing and laughing and shouting out at the top of their voices. And their deep-throated murmurs and cries so filled his ears that Pieter could hear nothing besides.

Pieter leaned over the side to gaze at the earth. The fields fled by with great rapidity and followed each other in narrow checks of yellow, green and brown. Rows of haystacks rose up and disappeared—swift, scattered and silent. The red roofs were as flat as folded paper. The cowbell sounded thin and hollow in the distance, and beneath him the canal, now curved, swept by with a tranquil swish. Pieter suddenly curled his legs up under him as one, two, three enormous towers, topped by steeples and surmounted by threatening weather vanes loomed up beneath him. Some clouds that had been torn shrieked and moaned. Beneath the troupe were long rows of pointed gables, narrow and precipitous streets, and a great square where the parasols of the market women were huddled together like frightened birds. Beyond the town a thin white road extended for some distance. Along the whole length of it, carriages which, from the great height, looked the size of peas, rolled on endlessly like tiny balls. The plains swept by and then still more plains of which one noticed only the sunlit surface and the astounded faces of the people in the scattered villages. Pieter had no conception of the time he spent in viewing this ever changing panorama, when an immense gray barrier suddenly appeared on the horizon. The clamor of the clouds swelled still louder and Pieter was afraid he would be crushed in the mob as they pressed and shoved together.

A narrow defile lay between some steep, polished rocks, a deep defile in which all the clouds were soon engulfed, a sighing, puffing, restless mass, bestirring each other with sharp, confused cries. On every side gleamed cities, white

and deserted. When the clamor reached a hitherto unprecedented height, Pieter, frightened, clenched his fists, to be ready for anything that might occur.

From a slanting plane on which the somber sun cast golden reflections, rose the house of the King of the Wind—a small house and very black, with a door and window barred with heavy iron and set in red casements. All the clouds were massed in the narrow vertical valleys, tranquil, tired and silent, and muffled in gray robes.

Not a sound anywhere. It seemed as though he could touch the distant peaks with his finger. The air was so invigorating that it filled him with a desire to run across the unbroken fields of snow and down the endless sloping plain until he had to stop and pant for breath. Pieter felt a little cold. He put the collar of his shirt up about his neck and with the back of his hand wiped off a drop of ice which shone on his ruddy nose. Then he murmured to himself, "It's almost evening," and he felt very ill at ease, clad as he was in only his socks and with the drifts of snow up to the calves of his legs. All the same he laughed at the idea that one of his feet was above the vane of the church and the other on the chimney of his house like good old Father Christmas. Still laughing he took three steps toward the house of the King of the Wind in spite of the stubborn snow and rapped boldly at the door. A heavy voice grumbled:

"Come in!"

He pushed the door open. Under the low joists, beneath an Argand lamp the King of the Wind was seated at the table, on which was a pint of Hollands. His green eyes were so clear and so transparent in his ruddy face that one could have seen through them across the whole earth.

A dozen chubby-cheeked children were rolling about in a corner of the dwelling, blowing air in each other's faces, and puffing up their cheeks till they looked like red balloons, and they laughed so heartily that their teeth seemed to leap out of their mouths. The draft of air from the door had made the lamp tremble and one would have said that flocks of golden birds swept through the pupils of

the King's eyes. He looked at Pieter, "What are you doing here, little fir cone?"

"I?" replied Pieter. "I am traveling."

"Ah, you are traveling! And how, if you please, in a sleigh, on horseback or are you walking?"

"On the backs of the clouds."

"Eh? What are you saying? And where are you going in that fashion, little cavalier?"

"To see if the earth is round enough to walk about."

"There, there, young one, I'll teach you to make fun of me." And he puckered his thick red brows, but, as his eyes were benign, Pieter was not frightened. Then the King looked at the green mug ornamented with red flowers and began to laugh, showing his great white teeth. "Do you know what that is, boy?"

"Sure," said Pieter. "It's Hollands."

"Do you think you could drink all that at one draught?"

"Give it to me," the boy said simply. All the children stopped their play and stared at him, craning their necks curiously. Among them Pieter noticed one little girl with blue eyes. Her hair was so light that it was almost white and seemed like very fine dried grass, and on either cheek bloomed a great wild poppy. And then Pieter drank the Hollands at one draught. He had never drunk Hollands before and he thought he was going to choke. "It is pepper and fire," he said to himself. And he squeezed his throat with all his might to keep from sneezing. Then he put down the mug and shrugged his shoulders nonchalantly. "Pooh! In my country it is much stronger than that!" He felt his cheeks flush hotly as the King of the Wind burst into a laugh that made the windows rattle and the hut tremble. All the children nudged each other and rolled about as before. The little girl could not keep from smiling. Her lips had a touch of orange in them and her whole face seemed like a flaming poppy in which her eyes looked almost green. Pieter saw no more than two burning eyes which made his head whirr, and then all the people and the table and the benches seemed to be swinging around and around the lamp, but still he could hear the King, who was putting on his great coat and grumbling all the

while, "I was amusing myself and I had forgotten that I must hurl three avalanches from the top of the glacier and cast a forest of pines into the depths of a great chasm." He opened the door with his foot. The cold and the darkness swept in and blotted out everything.

"Aren't you hungry? There's some black bread and white cheese on the table." Pieter rubbed his eyes. The little one waited with a slight air of mockery. The room was very quiet. They had relit the lamp and there was, in truth, some bread and cheese on the table. In the corner the children rolled about on some great shaggy bear skins. Pieter thanked her, as he should have, but the thing that he really wanted to eat was her rosy cheeks. He could already feel them crackle like apples under his teeth. But he really was very hungry. This wild journey on the back of the clouds had made him quite famished.

He sat down at the table and began to eat so heartily that the little girl took a great deal of pleasure in cutting one slice of bread after another for him. When he had finished he thanked her again and they began to talk. She asked him where he was from, how old he was, and whether he had any little sisters. And Pieter told her about the little house with the heliotropes, of the plain, of the cows, and, especially, of the one that had just had two calves. He was so enthusiastic with his stories that he immediately saw that the little girl wanted to go there too. He boasted of the beautiful toys in his country, and of the great mills that swung about on their green bases and the child's eyes grew large with wonder. She jumped with joy at the thought of hanging from the wings and being whirled so rapidly that she would lose breath. For it wasn't for nothing that she was the daughter of the King of the Wind. Seeing her so interested, Pieter dared to ask, "Mademoiselle, would you care to come back with me to my home in Flanders? It really is an awfully good place to enjoy oneself?" She reflected for a moment and her face drooped and the expression of her eyes deepened. She looked so very pretty that Pieter thought of the best thing to say. "My mother does make the nicest Christmas

cakes with black wheat flour, and eggs, and moist sugar. My little brothers eat them and then lick the crumbs off their cheeks, as the cakes are so very good." She looked him straight in the eye:

"With moist sugar?"

"And with cinnamon, too," he added quickly.

She stood up and looked at the door and then turned to him in a perplexed manner. "Does your mother scold you very much?"

"Never! And besides, I'll explain to her that you are my fiancée and she won't have a thing to say against it." Thoroughly convinced, the little girl threw a green and white woolen scarf about her throat and took Pieter's hand and led him out. All the stars were there chattering away among themselves. The girl walked on ahead and Pieter followed the little black footprints that seemed to drop from her nimble heels. Then she stopped and listened. She whispered, "My father isn't here, but how are we going to get away rapidly?" Pieter wrinkled his forehead:

"Follow me, I'll go and find my cloud again." Then they descended toward the valley where the clouds were sleeping. And after having disturbed some which rolled over and grumbled, Pieter at last reached the one that had brought him. He complained a little when he stuck his nose out of the coverlet. But when he recognized Pieter he laughed good-naturedly and ran his hand through his disheveled hair. "I thought you'd want to go back pretty soon. These travelers are all the same. As soon as they have gotten away from their mothers' skirts they want to go back. All right, let's go. She's rather nice, that girl of yours. Both of you get up on my shoulders, but don't pull my hair." They thanked him very much and climbed up. The girl was a little frightened and sat behind him. "Don't be frightened," Pieter whispered to her, "he's not at all bad." And then he stopped talking as his lips brushed her tiny ear.

Evening was falling when the plain of Flanders opened its immense arms to welcome them. Pieter leaned over and

tried to pick out his home. The whole place seemed in confusion. Bands of clouds huddled in their hooded cloaks wandered in all directions. They were distracted by some fear that seemed to draw them down toward the earth, and they acted as though they would have liked to hide there. Then all of a sudden they apparently lost courage, removed their cloaks with the streaming tails and betook themselves off in silence, and nothing could be seen but a great gray mass of an indistinct and uncertain shape. Suddenly the solid shoulders on which they were sitting bent under them. The girl seized the boy by the arm and stared at him fixedly, her eyes bright with fear. Pieter pressed his lips together and looked about him in every direction. At the moment when they slipped off the rack he saw a great ladder of many colors that reached down to the door. Holding the girl in one arm, he jumped to it. At the same time he saw his mother who was scurrying about the plain picking up the white pants and the striped shirts. Behind the lattice, the heliotropes bowed their heads until the spell of bad weather should be over. A ray of sunlight lit up the white house. The heliotropes lifted their heads. And Pieter's mother, who had turned around to see if there were any more clothes on the field, saw her son descending, calmly holding onto the yellow bars of the rainbow with one hand, and in the other holding the slender girl whose white and green scarf streamed out in the wind.

It was very gay in the little house for three whole days. Pieter sat in one corner of the hearth and the girl in the other, and between them the mother cooked and baked unceasingly before the huge fire. She had put on the great blue tablecloth. The three little brothers, their cheeks brown with moist sugar, rolled on the floor and played with the cat who had a smudge of black about either eye. The cakes were warm and very sweet.

On the third day when the mother went to look for some fagots for the fire she neglected to close the door completely. The daughter of the King of the Wind jumped out. Her eyes became as clear as the daylight that streamed

through the partially opened door. Her striped scarf spread out toward the heavens and she disappeared with a ripple of limpid laughter.

Early the next morning Pieter went out of the house with the blue basin in his hand. The clouds were sweeping by so rapidly and so impetuously that immediately he was filled with the desire to make another voyage.

BESIDE THE MILL

By ELINE PELINE

THE old miller, father Ougrine, attentively cast a last investigative glance at the rotten framework of his mill and at the masonry which supported it, and leaning on his crutches, limped toward the door with difficulty. Worn out, he dropped down there for an instant to recover from his fatigue. Sharp pains, aroused by the short walk, shot through his broken leg. The old man sighed heavily, took off his hat and leaned up against the wall.

"Ah, I'm going to be crippled just in the midst of my old age."

The sun had just set behind the azure barrier of the distant mountains and the last fiery rays were already disappearing from the horizon, which draped itself little by little in the gray robe of twilight, profound and infinite. The stifling heat of the summer day had given place to the sweet freshness of evening and a benevolent breeze fanned the parched farm.

Far off toward the plain, the last accents of the sad song of the harvesters rose up and sorrowfully swelled to the height of the heavens. The twilight was slowly fading away. In the sky, small brilliant stars shone one after the other. In the streams, the croaking of the frogs was heard uninterruptedly, and their cries, sharp like the clashing of steel, seemed to spread afar a dreamy stillness in the midst of the peaceful silence of the evening. Farther still in the prairies the crickets took up their light chant. On the road which led from the mill to the city the last noisy, joyous sound of a crowd of harvesters died away. Along the path winding its way close to the stream, a little bell sounded with a cadenced and monotonous toll.

The roaring of the mill was distinct from the other noises and had a certain mysterious air. Old man Ougrine struck

a light with his briquet, lit his pipe and tried in vain to stand up. The pains in his sick leg prevented it.

"Milena . . . Milena . . . where the devil are you!" he cried, slightly agitated, and he gazed scrutinizingly into the darkness.

"Here I am now," replied the clear voice of a woman from behind the iron gate which opened into the little garden in front of the mill.

"Come, let's go inside, it's already late!" insisted the old man.

"Let me finish sprinkling. . . . The heat has dried up everything!" replied Milena.

The cadenced sound of the little bell slowly approached and stopped in front of the garden. The light of a cigarette shone in the gloom. Milena stood up and cast an uneasy glance in that direction.

Close to the hedge, in the obscurity of the underbrush a man had stopped, while near him a heavily laden donkey was feeding on the weeds.

"Hello, Milena!" a young voice called softly and rather uncertainly from the darkness.

Chills of emotion ran through the body of Milena. Barefooted, her sleeves rolled up, a heavy mass of blond hair under the white kerchief which covered her head, she had the appearance of a fairy in the middle of the garden.

"God bless you, Svilene," she replied with some confusion, pretending to run away.

"You sprinkle the lawn too late," exclaimed the newly arrived Svilene.

Milena stopped short.

"Heavens, heavens!" she thought. Then, "Where are you going, what are you doing? We haven't seen each other in such a long while," Svilene began again, this time with more assurance.

"Ah, now, you know very well that this is the period for work," replied Milena with some embarrassment.

"Since you've got married you don't often go out into society."

"Why do I need to go out?"

"Why . . . Who knows? . . . It appears that you are very content at home. . . . Near Stoyan?" said Svilene, mockingly.

Milena broke off a little branch of the willow by her side and, without replying, she began to tear off the leaves, her head bowed.

"One becomes accustomed . . . the human mind changes!" said Svilene. He had leaned up against the hedge and was smoking. Near by the donkey stood calm and docile.

Milena still continued to strip the leaves from the branch, not knowing what to say. She was thinking how offensive were the words of Svilene. She wished very much to explain that he was wrong in these thoughts. Her heart was beating as if it would break and an inexpressible sadness swelled her breast, stifling her words and bringing a torrent of tears to her eyes.

"Nothing doing—that's the way of the world. It has no heart. . . . It is probably best that it should be that way," Svilene continued slowly. "Love one and marry another, then make your way in the world. . . . Sell yourself and live. . . . Provided that you be comfortable. . . ."

"Svilene, don't say that, you who know that . . ." heavily sighed Milena.

"I don't understand."

"You who know by whose fault . . . things turned out in this way . . . don't blame me . . ." she replied again in an undertone.

"I don't understand what you mean! Come a little closer, but how afraid you are of me!"

"I must go inside, for papa is sick. . . . Today I left my mother-in-law alone and came here to be near him," said Milena approaching with fear.

"Are you not going to be grumbled at?"

"That doesn't matter. . . . I can't abandon my father for them when he's in this condition."

Svilene was silent.

"And how are you, Svilene? What do you do?" asked Milena.

"Me? I'm well. I live, I work, and I drink. . . . The

gay, turbulent Svilene that you know—is dead. . . . This Svilene whom you see now is quite another person: gloomy, wicked and often intoxicated!” replied Svilene with a strong pull on his cigarette.

The feeble light from the cigarette lit up his round blond face, and his blue eyes, and Milena saw him, the same fine man that he was a year ago when they were hopelessly in love with each other. His words seemed deceitful to her.

“What a man you are, and how wicked!” she said, pointing at him with her finger. “It seems to me that you haven’t changed at all. I hear it said that with the young Popova . . .”

“I haven’t given you up for lost yet,” he said after a short silence—“and I don’t believe I shall be able to forget you so soon, as you have forgotten me, you . . . you women, you haven’t two cents’ worth of constancy.” His voice trembled.

“Svilene, don’t speak like that . . . do you know how much I . . . think of you . . . and how much I still love you! . . .”

Stifled sobs choked her words. She hid her face in her hands.

Svilene reached out his arms and took one of the young woman’s hands.

“Chut! I don’t want any weeping!” he murmured with a calm voice. “No sobs! Do you say you still love me? Nothing but suffering. . . . A love as stupid . . . secret, hidden. Oh! Absolutely absurd. . . . Come, come, don’t cry any more! The first time that we’ve seen each other in such a long while, and you begin crying.”

“Svilene, Svilene, do you know how I suffer? . . . You don’t know,” she lamented, “you know nothing about it, nothing!”

“Come, be quiet, be quiet. . . .”

Thrusting his strong arm around her slender waist Svilene drew Milena toward him.

She threw herself on his breast and, as in the days long gone by, their lips united in a hard kiss, but this time a guilty kiss.

The willows whispered softly and peacefully, the old

mill squeaked mournfully. In the blue sky the stars glittered—glittered unceasingly. The raucous voice of the old man came from the mill, petulant and complaining.

"Milena . . . Milena! where are you, my child?"

Milena trembled.

"I'm coming, I'm coming!" she replied aloud. "Oh, Svilene, how I have thought: O God, why can I not meet him one time if only to speak to him."

"Only speak to me?"

"Of course! . . ."

"Well, tell me then . . . I'm listening. . . ."

"Ah, Svilene, how mean you are! Why don't you get married? I think I would suffer less. I wouldn't think of you so often. . . . I would become more easily adapted to my new family. . . . How I hate those people now! It is exactly what one deserves who goes against the sentiments of one's heart," said Milena, passing her hand over the large head of the docile little donkey which stood near by and stared at her peacefully with its soft eyes.

"Marko! Marko!" she said to it. "My good, little gray donkey, say nothing to any one. My little beast, you have so often been the witness of our meetings. . . . Keep silent, keep silent, my good little Marko. . . ."

Svilene smiled.

Milena had forgotten herself.

The plaintive voice of the old man was heard again. "Milena, my child! . . ."

"Here I am. I'm coming now!" replied Milena in a loud voice, adding:

"Why does he call me now? . . . Let him wait. . . . Ah, Svilene, I do not know whether you still love me or not, but I . . . Stoyan is good, as good as a little boy. Believe me . . . I could beat him until he cried like a child and he would say nothing, not a thing . . . but I hate him. . . . You, you are violent, mean, but . . ."

"We have never had the good fortune to live together, what do you expect?" sighed Svilene.

"You are the cause of it, Svilene . . ."

"Poverty is the cause of it, haven't I always told you that . . . I live in a house which is not my own . . . I

am obliged to pay off the heavy debts of my parents . . . I am always in the service of others, always. I've become the slave of others. You would have suffered with me. you would have suffered more than I . . . Did I have the right to sadden the fine days of your youth, and poison your life? . . . I reflected, ah, I reflected much, but I could not make up my mind . . ."

"If you had loved me more, you would have made up your mind."

"You, you have your fancies! . . . Before, too, you always blamed me."

The old man began his calling again. "Milena!"

And the painful sound of his hacking cough came from behind the willows.

"I'm coming, I'm coming! . . ."

"Stay a little longer," said Svilene.

"Svilene, let me go, I beg you, it is late!"

"No; stay! . . ."

And Svilene stepped over the hedge.

Above the stars shone tranquilly. The willows, standing like tall and obscure shadows, whispered softly. The old mill continued its mournful screaming.

"Milena!" cried the old man again. "Milena, where the devil are you?" he repeated in an angry tone, but for a long time he received no reply.

A full minute slipped by, the little copper bell again gave out its cadenced sounds that echoed softly along the road to the village. A man's soft song suddenly resounded in the stillness and echoed with a strange tone in the gloom of the night:

Ho, there, my youthful years,
You have swiftly taken wing.

The voice trilled, trembled sadly in the solitude and stopped.

ESKI-ARAPE

By YORDAN YOVKOFF

(Notes of an Officer of the Frontier Guards)

IN the almost uninhabitable swamps about the mouth of the Mesta there are several villages occupied solely by negroes. In this tepid but fertile land, tradition tells us that Hassein Pacha possessed large farms, great tracts of roughly cultivated fields worked mostly by *pomaks* whom he had brought with him from the Rhodopes. However these mountain folk were unable to stand the heat and the fevers so prevalent in the region of the Kara Sou: many died, and others fled, and they were soon replaced by negro labor.

These farms no longer exist, but the descendants of these negroes still remain. They dwell in little low gray houses hidden under the branches of the great fig trees or crouched behind the brushwood of the thuya. In the cracks of the crumbling brick walls, half hidden beneath a thick mass of yellow and red blossoms, the cactus sends forth its green blades and affords some shadow to the little emerald lizards that languidly stretch themselves on the dusty stone.

In summer the heat is unbearable and the atmosphere is stifling; not even the smallest breeze comes to sway the frail stems of the reeds that cover the bed of the almost dried up river. Nevertheless the plain is extremely fertile.

Large fat buffaloes, followed by a train of laborers almost as black as they, draw the massive wagons over the steaming mud or crash through the tangles of brown grass in the fields. Among the younger negroes there are some who are really beautiful. They have lithe, slender, hard-muscled bodies, and their limbs are as firm and smooth as if they had been modeled in dark bronze. They are a simple people, naïve and inoffensive. When they begin to speak, a smile as carefree and joyous as that of a child brightens

their countenance and reveals a set of teeth of great whiteness and perfection; and it is in this smile that the whole expression of their face is concentrated.

The frontier guard was stationed in a rambling farmhouse, long abandoned, and one whose massive walls seemed to conceal all the exotic mysteries and dark secrets of the Orient. An unusually large overhanging roof, windows and verandas protected by heavy bars of worked iron, the structure entirely covered by the twisting vines of the hop, the ivy and the glycine, and the whole surrounded by a thick wall of unusual height, all this tended to give the effect of some medieval outpost.

The farmhouse was at some distance from the nearest village, but nevertheless we were occasionally visited by our black neighbors. Among them there were two who came more frequently than the others: Eski-Arape and Tata-Tita.

Eski-Arape was the oldest of the negroes and the only one who was not born here: he was a native of the Soudan.

"In my country," he told me at our first interview, "we have those who hunt on horseback, but instead of hunting game they are the hunters of children. They prowl around the outskirts of the villages and when they notice a child that has wandered some distance from his parents, they seize him, carry him away, and later sell him."

It was in this fashion that he himself had been borne away. But as he was fourteen years old at the time, he still retained many recollections of his country.

Tata-Tita had nothing in common with the heroine of Bernard Shaw. He was a fine young mulatto and his true name was Chefket. He had served as a bugler in the Turkish army and the soldiers would often joke with him and ask him to play Turkish military airs. Tata-Tita would always respond good-naturedly.

But he would only play these airs with his mouth, always singing the same syllables: ta-ta-ti-ta. And that served him as a name.

He had no fixed vocation and worked but little. For many years in the past he had piloted a raft and, for a very modest sum, transported carriages and travelers from

one bank of the river to the other. That was how Tata-Tita came to know Kara-Sou and the surrounding forests, and to have an intimate knowledge of the wild game which lived there. He was lithe and sharp, though too great an indulgence in brandy was deteriorating him rapidly. It was rumored that he was a smuggler of much cunning.

Eski-Arape always came to the guard with some small request: He would ask for the exemption of his cattle from the usual formalities, or permission to cut some wood in the forest stretching along the frontier. But he would never directly present his demand. Before the request the same conversation always ensued:

"Commendar Effendi,"¹ he would say to me, "you don't do anything but read and smoke, read and smoke! You must miss your country very much."

"That goes without saying, Abdullah. I miss it very much. And you—don't you miss the Soudan?"

"Of course I miss it."

"Wouldn't you like to go back there?"

"Oh, I should like to very much. Isn't it my country? Of course I have a yearning to see the land of my birth. But it is too far, Commendar Effendi. A six months' voyage and one must have at least seven passports . . . for one must cross seven kingdoms. There is Stamboul, Izmir, Massir . . ." And he would count on his fingers and enumerate still other names which not only were the names of no kingdoms but were without the slightest significance. "And there is also the sea to cross." After a short silence he would suddenly begin again in a most naïve tone, "Commendar Effendi, you are a most learned man. Is it true that in the sea there are serpents so large that they can even stop the boats?"

He always seemed certain that this would astound and greatly confuse me, and at the end he would smile complacently and with a satisfied air. Eski-Arape was very old and his face aroused a feeling of repulsion and fear: a skin as black as Moroccan leather, eyes the whites of which were like dark shadows, and lips of a heavy coffee

¹ Major.

color. In his face, a set of thick white teeth were doubly conspicuous, as it was but this alone that gave the visage a human aspect.

From this time on we often conversed together. At last he would go away very contented and happy, bearing in his black hand the letter which authorized him to cut as much wood as he desired.

Outside the soldiers would detain him for a long while, teasing and laughing with him.

He often came to visit the guard. Tata-Tita would come also. Only, he came like a fox which prowls stealthily around the chicken house on noiseless padded feet. Suddenly, without having seen him come, I would perceive him in the midst of the soldiers and, as suddenly, he would depart. One day, I noticed there was too much intimacy between my non-commissioned officer and Eski-Arape and Tata-Tita. Tata-Tita would avoid meeting me, or rather if he met me, he would look at me in a cunning and distrusting manner. I saw that something was being contrived behind my back.

The room of the non-commissioned officer was on the ground floor, a little apart from the others. One evening I passed close by and glanced through the window. The three friends were assembled inside: the sub-officer, Eski-Arape, and Tata-Tita. Though it was very warm, there was a small fire in the chimney, and on a small table stood some glasses and a bottle of brandy.

The sub-officer was from Banderma. He was a young man of an intelligent appearance and he knew the Turks better than the Turks knew themselves. At this moment he was speaking of Africa. One could readily see that he had read Livingstone, Mayne Reid and Brehm.

He was talking about many things: the dank, tropical forests, tapestried with parasitical ivy and great mosses, and full of ferocious beasts and serpents; of the desert and of mirages which deceive the eye, of stray caravans, of palm trees, of oases, and of the terrible roaring of the lion at sunset.

Then he described at length the small huts made from strips of bamboo.

The people who live there are black, and though light-hearted and free, they are hot-headed, and passionate in love, and cruel and ferocious in their vengeance and their combats. They know how to amuse themselves, drink wine from cocoanut shells; and they have a music which charms the serpents and puts fire into the blood of the half-naked dancing women. They adorn their arms and breasts with imitation pearls and pieces of money.

At these last words Tata-Tita uttered an exclamation, raised his glass, and whistled the charge. This was the signal agreed upon for emptying their glasses. These signals Tata-Tita repeated very often. He drank very slowly, raised the bottle to perceive what quantity remained inside and paid very little attention to the conversation. But the old Eski-Arape listened most intently, trembling with emotion. And he kept repeating:

"That's right, that's exactly right, Tchaouch Effendi.¹ I remember it. E-he!"

And he thundered out some song in a loud and bawling voice.

Of course I forbade these reunions. But the evil had already taken a great hold on the heart of the old negro. Even without that, he had the feebleness of mind common to persons of his age, but now he no longer spoke of anything but the Soudan and his youth. He spoke incoherently and almost unintelligibly, his hands and his jaws trembling, while his gaze wandered far off, and his face looked feverish and stupid. His wife herself came to complain. She was a strong old woman, very cross and fiery. She begged me to forbid the sub-officer and the Chefket to meet with her old man. They made a fool of him.

Before, he was so good, so wise, so kind. And now he quarreled with her continually and threatened to sell everything and go back to the Soudan. He ate almost nothing and could not sleep, or when sleep did overtake him, he would begin to talk, as from a deep dream, in a barbarous and incomprehensible language. The old woman wept.

I had Eski-Arape called before the guard. On this day

¹ Sub-officer.

he was feeling master of himself a little more than usual. I tried to dissuade him.

"Commendar Effendi!" he said to me with a sad air of submission. "My children are dead. I'm old, at home they always quarrel with me. I can't stand it any longer. I'm going to leave. Where one is born, that is where one should live."

He related this anecdote to me: A long time ago, the Sultan Suleiman noticed a little bird which was singing marvelously. He ordered his servants to take it and put it in a golden cage, and since he was the Sultan, his wish was complied with. But the bird was silent. It sang no longer. It shook its head and repeated unceasingly, "*Vatan! Vatan!*"¹ The Sultan was filled with pity and ordered that it be freed. The bird flew away from the golden cage and alighted on a bush close by. And there was its nest.

After a slight admonition from me, he left.

Late the same evening, I was returning from my round on the frontier. The village was quiet, the houses were but shadows behind the heavy gloom of the fig trees. Only a little oval window shone like a yellow eye in the darkness.

The air echoed with a monotonous, heavy sound, like the dripping of rain on the roof.

It came from the dwelling of Eski-Arape. I approached and stopped my horse. Inside some one was knocking on a tarbouch and singing in a croaking and feeble voice, with a muffled and nasal tone. It was Eski. At the beginning I heard a soft and long-drawn-out melody which was often reiterated, a song sweet with love and many tears and soft memories.

Then the sounds of the tarbouch, and the song itself quickened, while the melody took the rhythm of a playful and joyous dance. The tarbouch gave way to castanets.

Then the harsh and scolding voice of a woman burst out:

"Shut-up, shut-up, cursed old man. *Vai, Allah! Allah!*"

The song ceased, Eski-Arape replied something, but I did not hear what.

¹ Native land.

"*Vatan, Vatan!*" the woman cried again in a despairing tone. "Always *Vatan*. You must be losing your senses. Come, now, you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

A few moments elapsed, then the strokes on the tarbouch were resumed, and the singing began again. Still dragging and soft at first, with nasal and heavy tones, but pregnant with tenderness, love and despairing grief.

Eski was singing of his yearning for the Soudan.

SEVERUS

By JOSEF CAPEK

VERY often, in different places, and in the presence of a variety of circumstances, have I had occasion to reflect upon the love between friend and friend, the love between lovers, and the love between husband and wife. There can be no doubt, because proofs of the fact are common, that man, and even the most inconceivably malicious of men, is at bottom so strange that he can really manifest genuine love. It is even true that he sometimes loves without asking anything whatever in return.

It is also an unquestionable fact that the soldiers of numberless armies, leaving for the front to encounter incredible sufferings, have been loved, every one, by some human soul. And from the vast assembly of human hearts who thus loved them has arisen to the skies, as it were, an immense cloud made up of prayers and wailing. In precisely the same way are beloved the infants who are born to swell the number of earth's human beings, and those who quit the world and descend to the grave. As for us, as for you and me, we are just like every one else.

It was toward noon, at the moment when workmen whose work prevents them from going home to their meal are looking out for convenient stairways, lumber piles and heaps of bricks, where they may sit at ease and eat their lunch full in the public eye. Women workers make haste to eat before the food gets cold. They carefully steer their course through the throngs about them and bear with the greatest solicitude their lunch-baskets or napkins. Napkins are carried by their four corners and the women are very careful to avoid all awkwardness, to jostle nobody, to keep from slipping, and to maintain their soup, milk and coffee right side up.

One of these women is holding her child on one arm and her lunch-basket on the other. Today she has cooked for the meal the favorite dishes preferred by her husband.

She is navigating her way more cautiously than a Hamburg pilot would do. Her skilled and diligent steering is finally rewarded. The vessel arrives in port without the least damage, bearing a full cargo. The husband who meets her takes the lunch-basket and sets it on the ground near by.

"Eat, don't let it get cold."

But the husband catches up the child and presses its cold little nose against his own face. As he holds it close, his eyes, bright with happiness, look before him into space. The sky is gray, the pavements wet, the vegetation leafless. The day is warm, for winter, winter is at the moment of snowless days, and the Christmas season has arrived.

The woman, looking at her child and husband, does not know which of the two she loves the more. She repeats, hesitating, "Eat, don't let the food grow cold."

This time, though, perhaps another woman is speaking, for, close beside our first group, there is another man who is clasping to his face another child, after having deposited, like the first man, a lunch-basket upon the ground. Still another meal is growing cold, and a third wife is looking on as a third husband presses a third child to his cheek. Like others, this woman also is at a loss to decide which one she loves the more dearly—her husband, or the child who is nipping his father's ear with his little teeth.

"Eat, the child will keep for bye-and-bye."

These three men were clad in furs, for they were accustomed to clasp and handle steel. They were all chauffeurs. They were gathered in the Square Vincelas, during the temperate period of the winter, and at Christmas time. They looked at each other with pride and joy, for each one—none more favored than another—was holding his child close to his face, each one's wife was with him, and each one had a well-filled lunch-basket by his side. One cannot live unless he eats!

It isn't always true, that. Some people prefer to leave the bread and butter and depend upon love. A fine and rare thing, love, the most powerful force in the world, and sometimes the only thing in the universe that counts. The love of lovers is sweet indeed, I know nothing about

the love that exists between friends, but I am sure that the tenderest love of all is the love between husband and wife.

When Severus was still only a student, he appeared to have no special qualities at all. When he was still only a pale, obscure student, devoted to geography, to history, to geology, to natural science, to archeology and to anthropology, and when he sometimes won a prize or a traveling scholarship, nobody ever imagined that he was unusually faithful and conscientious in his labors.

Severus never fed his childish dreams with the strange and adventurous travels recounted by Jules Verne, yet, while still an industrious but unimportant young man, he took up riding and the use of firearms. What did he think he would gain from these pursuits? With whom did he imagine he would fight? Severus seemed decidedly satisfied not to become a soldier. He seemed bent on gaining time, somehow. When finished with his books, he promptly discarded his geography, history, geology, and all the rest, especially anthropology, of his unparalleled knowledge. He learned how to ride and how to shoot at a target, but was neither more nor less apt at these sports than any one else. He talked little about himself. Every one knew that he was absorbed in his studies, and that was all they associated with Severus. By virtue of his self-discipline and persistence, however, he obtained his doctorate while still very young; and, as soon as he had become a doctor, he immediately married a girl he loved. Her name was Edith.

He went away with her to Algeria. Africa had no terrors for him, for he was accompanied by Edith, the girl of his heart, now his beloved wife. So accompanied, who could fear earth's remotest corner? Who would not be enchanted at the prospect of beginning life, with the woman adored above all, beneath the palm trees, to behold with her the magical Southern Cross, and to clasp her more closely at night when the jackals were yelping from the cemeteries and when Zouerah and Khtab l'Arait were frightening the natives? Edith was also happy, because she loved her young husband.

From this journey, Severus obtained the material for his "Contributions to the Ethnography of Southwestern Africa." This first journey of his served as the foundation of later studies and for the work of his entire life. In Africa, though, Severus paid more attention to history than ethnography. He was strongly attracted by the shadowy past of this most obscure region of the earth. He undertook a series of travels which he embellished by important and celebrated discoveries. His wife Edith usually, but not invariably, shared his travels and his labors, accompanying him on his bold and perilous ventures into this dark country, as a loving wife cannot but desire to remain at her husband's side throughout all the wanderings of his life.

The bright, early flower of their romance lost its first freshness after a time, as maturer days appeared. Severus' labors had become more and more extensive and important, and now he was a man honored and considered everywhere. He was like a great hunter, or an inveterate seeker of gold, who possesses a divining rod which guides him, directs his suspicions and his guesses, and finally reveals the secrets concealed in shadows, buried in the earth, and lying lost and forgotten amid the silent dust of remotest ages. Oh, epochs of antiquity, have you left any traces which speak forth from human lips? For the antique peoples have been destroyed, annihilated, and swept from the surface of the earth. Their cities have been devastated, their tombs and graves have been effaced and leveled, their ashes have been thrown to the winds, and what remains to tell us of these our ancestors of the ancient world?

Severus was wholly consecrated to the discovery of these lost secrets, which he had the knack of a fine hunting-dog in scenting out. Were the bodies of those who, ages before, had traversed the waters seeking sites for their gardens and towns, still existent beneath the waves above them? Could traces of their language, could their faint, dim voices still be heard in the noonday silence, in the rustling of the thickets, or in the murmurs of the midnight wind? Who among the living is old enough to have memories of the old times? And still Severus never tired of

seeking memories and traces of the years which had been buried deep, long centuries ago.

He loved this soil and these people, who were children of the ancient world perpetuated into modern times. Among these children of the past he found the scattering heritages of the long ago still surviving. He loved these strange regions and their primitive inhabitants so much that he felt as if he could live nowhere else in the world.

"I am sick at heart," he said to his wife Edith. "I really suffer at being obliged to leave these places, full of joy and happiness, to return to countries of sadness and poverty, where life is only a wornout discipline and habitude, wholly automatic, where art is withering, where science, reduced to lifeless formulas, is drying up, and where, under the guise of policies and parties, everything has fallen to the ground. It all resembles a steady march toward the grave."

But on repeated occasions Severus revisited the land of his joy and destiny. Edith accompanied him, though not on every journey. The two were united by the profound love of lovers and the profounder love of man and wife. Their love was unusually deep. "Whom could I possibly remember, if not yourself," wrote Severus to her, "yourself, my tender comrade, my wife, always so extraordinarily anxious to sacrifice yourself, and always lighting for me, even when I must be separated from you, the road of my life. Ah, it is your smile of abnegation and your hopeful words which point the pilgrim's pathway—that poor pilgrim who goes away again when he has scarcely come home! It is your dear smile which cheers my painful hours, and your sorrows are the greatest ones I ever know."

The springtime of their love had passed, but their love remained ever the same, the great, changeless love of lovers and married people. Severus was making his last journey, which was his most famous one, and the one most fruitful in results. But this time he was not accompanied by his beloved Edith, as he set out on his quest for buried treasure.

Untold secrets are concealed within the language of old

Ethiopia. Who will ever untangle its mysteries, that tongue so full of gossip and chatter, that speech which so jealously guards all it knows of our remote ancestry and which bestows upon humanity a heritage which must be preserved in divine silence?

Who can tell us the meaning of the outline of a ram, with a sun hanging at its neck, carved upon the ancient rocks? What did the sign of the carven buffalo convey? Scattered are now the graves of Itherene, whose name it were better not to speak aloud, but to whisper only with a tongue weighted with grains of wheat, for men must ever dread the divine curse hanging over him who traffics in blood. That divine malediction still persists, even though the pillared tombs of the Itherenians have vanished, even if that blond-haired, blue-eyed race have been absorbed into the mists of the past. That was a lofty race of hunters, whose prayers arose to Itherter, the Buffalo. That was a race foredoomed to death, living without prosperity and knowing no promised future.

The Kabyle hovels are now roofed with French tiles, and their roofs no longer the ancient inscriptions which could have borne witness had they been respected. These inscriptions no longer exist, even at Terroual, where the houses hide jealously Baerk, the secret of buried wealth which drives men underground. For such relics, one must go as far as the country of the Ait Bou Mahdi. Here, in the foundations of the dwellings, one may learn of a rich patrimony of secret history, establishing the existence, anciently, of a race living beneath the surface of the earth and coming out from their habitation when the world was created. This noble race emerged from the soil as did the ancient Buffalo, the great ancestor of those numberless animals which have fallen beneath the spears of the ancient, audacious hunters. So also did the mythological Sun-Ram rise from the dust, the Ram who ripens the nourishing grain and the fruitful crops, and whom, at a later time, the Egyptians well remembered in their representations of Amman, their sun god, whose head was the head of a ram.

Loudly, powerfully, speaks the voice of Fame! En-

chanting is the sound of Fame's trumpet! That divine breath which lifts Fame's locks and stirs her white robe makes drunken the hearts of men. Severus is nearing his goal. He is standing at the threshold of ancient secrets whose mystery he is about to solve. To him is granted the power to gain the friendship of those who mistrust, the craft to urge on the courage of hesitant lips, the wit to find the meaning of the silent tongue. Mouths which the fear of betraying old secrets has sealed for all others in the world will now bestow their favors upon him.

Severus is always safe, death never threatens him, on those travels of his. He is bold, and he will never be sacrificed upon the dark soil which yields its secrets to his searching mind. That soil knows that Severus is no stranger, knows that Severus is its loving friend. Severus inclines his head to drink deep at the bosom of that somber land. And, as to her helpless but beloved child, that somber land, old Africa, talks low to Severus, and lulls him with her tales. The thirst within him is quenched as he listens. He is at the goal. The veil of Time's long night will be rent before his glance, the ancient earth is half persuaded to reveal the symbols of a divine antiquity.

Severus strains his ear, astonished to behold the fulfilment of his life's desire. And yet there ascends from the depths of his soul the memory of Edith, of his life's dearest love, of his beloved wife, and he feels the memory flowing all through his being and rising clear before his eyes.

"May God bless all things which he hath created! Lovely are Cassay and Kordofan! All is beautiful in the great Soudan, all is noble among the Kabyles, between the Mandé and the Mossy, all is marvelous in the Sahel country! Haach! Dierra, Agada, Ganna, Silla! Haach! Fassa!"

Severus hearkens. The veil is vanishing from the lost secrets. An old man who remembers the traditions of his ancestors is speaking. He repeats the very words they used. He has put wheat grains on his tongue. Never could one whisper more low and softly than he now whispers, as he mouths the wheat grains. Never can softer words be spoken in the assemblies of men than are the

words he utters, half smothered by the wheat grains. For he has found the gentlest voice on earth for telling of old mysteries. That voice no woman must ever hear. In that voice murmur the distant ages, in a majestic chant. Severus listens, and, listening, he feels his heart beat at the memory of Edith, his well-beloved, faithful wife.

"Haach! Dierra, Agada, Ganna, Silla! Haach! Fassa!"

What delight! The Ram and the Ox are living. The old races live again. In their legends appears the primitive imagination which lived in western Europe in pre-historic time. The formidable vision of the grandiose, immense prospects of the days of earth's formative epochs began to revolve, unveiled. Severus had reached his ambition's end. As he wondered at the revelation, he beheld among his fantasies the figure of his adored Edith. He saw her dear eyes and calm smile, he heard her deep, low voice. The whiteness of her skin dazzled him, the sound of her loved step rang out within his soul.

Brilliant is the sun of Africa, sweet are the eyes of the Kabyle women, graceful are the forms of the antelopes, shining are the thresholds of the land of Ophir, land of gold! What a miracle to see the glowing land of the antique fables, the lost continent of Atlantis! Severus is having his deep desire gratified. The somber land will tell him all it knows. And yet his heart demands Edith. He must have the love that Edith bears him. As Fame and Triumph now call, beckoning, how glad and free his soul! Yet he longs for Edith. He wonders if she is tranquil, if she is well, if some dread thing has not befallen her, if death could have come upon her! He fears for that calm, familiar smile, for that dear voice, and he trembles with his love, but also shivers with anguish for his loved one's life.

"Haach! Dierra, Agada, Ganna, Silla! Haach! Fassa!"

Severus is coming home. Behind him lies the land of mystery. The country of his destiny has spoken. It has given into his keeping its secret of secrets. Severus now knows all against which he has bruised his baffled spirit time and time again. He knows all that he ever desired to know. But one thing he does not know, and his heart tremulously

laments his lack. He cannot yet be fully sure that Edith is really well. He cannot say with confidence, "She is alive!" Ah, his eyes, dim with gazing into the depths of the centuries, long to rest on Edith!

Severus arrives. It is June. The cherry trees no longer bloom. A cool wind stirs the treetops, the nodding wheat is murmuring in the breeze. The train speeds through interminable forests, across unending prairies. Everything is sparkling. In the sky, the fleecy clouds float by before the winds.

She is waiting for him. Edith, his wife, is here! She lives. The two stretch out to each other their eager arms. She is wearing a plaid skirt, her hat has a blue ribbon on it, the sleeves of her jacket are rustling at her movements. Severus sees her still youthful beauty reflected from every line and curve. His eyes stray over her dear, shining eyes, linger at her smile. Again he hears that sweet, deep voice. She is there. His dear, beloved wife is there.

In the garden, the half-open roses offer a caress. Flowers of the summertime and of joy are all a-bloom. Severus comes back into the house. Beside him walks Edith. Still does he possess her smile, her voice, her love. His breast swells with his supreme felicity. A tremor runs throughout his being. He recalls, in a sudden flash of recognition, the goodness of God; and, from the depths of his heart, he renders thanks and homage.

WARMING UP

By FRANA SRAMEK

IN war-time one has to accept a very mixed and dubious society, for there is no way of picking and choosing. You are thrown pellmell among old, wornout clothes and messmates, and you must do your best with all of them. You can cut up the old clothes and use them over again, but as for the comrades, you must trim yourself to fit them. And usually in so doing you must use large shears. The soldiers' shoes are big, rather than small, and the same is often true of the comradely hearts which one encounters, though this fact is not always perceived. As you grow accustomed to your new life, you are quite willing to borrow a louse now and then, to be returned with interest. Grief is handed about from one man to another, as an ardent woman of the camp-fire allows herself to be infested with insects by any one, without a protest. Should a choice and fine Sunday-school word be let fall in the conversation, this pearl always drops before some swine who rolls it about in his mouth with joy, merely because it is a Sunday-school word. When it ceases to be bandied about, every one feels, as it were, the pricking of a thorn under his nails or in his heart, and sorrow gnaws again at every soul. It isn't our fault, old fellow, but you see we can hardly celebrate Sundays very well, Sundays and everything that goes with them, and we well know why.

I have to smile when I chance to remember one of my war comrades. It isn't you, Pancrace, forest warden of the village near Kladno—you, who so beautifully proved in your own person the truth that a forest warden is best made from a poacher! Nor am I thinking of other comrades, who equally incarnated many other truths. The comrade I mean incarnated a sort of deception, or lie, which was very agreeable, and which did us all much good. I profess—even if the profession count against me

—a faithful and loyal friendship for that comrade, and I don't hesitate to pronounce and recognize his name. But you must hear me pronounce it. I shall not utter it from the hollow of my tongue, nor with honeyed lips, but with my teeth, my throat and with contracted palate, so that it may seem the name of a good, rough hand who makes everything ring around him wherever he goes. Here it is—listen: "War-r-ming up, my fine fellows!" What a pity you didn't hear! My palate is still numb, and the swelling there goes clear to my throat!

Rough times have happened. You were aroused right after midnight, you opened your eyes with a groan, the shadows jostled around you as a black ram might do, punching you in the eye with heavy blows, as soon as you came out of the dugout. In the night shadows, the rain crackled as if thousands of porcupines were devouring millions of cockroaches. You force your jaws open in a painful yawn, and a shiver runs over your bones, which shake like gravel in a bag. God and the world were great, there in the far-away land, and, somewhere in the vast world dogs were asleep in their kennels, the cattle were drowsing near the manger in the warm stable, and the forest guard was sheltering himself from the rain below some gable end, his hands buried in his great sleeves. Or, if he was a man of dire destiny, a doer of shady deeds—if he had killed his father that night, for example—that man was fleeing beneath the flood of rain, through little obscure lanes, or across the fields. Whatever the man, he was soothed by a feverish satisfaction, and warmed by whatever he had done. He was out on this rainy night on his own affairs. We poor chaps were not at all out on our own affairs. We were merely like chalk-marks, quickly erased by one stroke of the sponge. We were signed and sealed to others, we were at the mercy of other wills, we were destroyed by other wills.

We have just been awakened so that we may fully understand our nullity, and just when we wanted to sleep to forget everything. This day, whose sorrow exists in us, has begun too soon. The thing which was awaiting us was a four hours' escalade of the rude sides of the moun-

tain, a panting charge of the hostile trenches, a grim endurance of the sweat, the rain and the lice, and a painful effort to keep our ears pricked up at certain sounds which make the air swell as goose-flesh thickens human skin.

In spite of it all, we were still men. But what sort of men! Worn down almost to the bone—no! having nothing but bones, and creaking and shivering at every joint. Somewhere in the middle part of us there was a dilapidated stomach which painted for itself in lively colors the fine mouthfuls swallowed long ago, in the calm quiet of the days when there was peace. While the frozen void which we felt within us made us yawn, and while this yawn was the only expression of our distress, something brighter than the shadows came to us from the kitchen to form a warm, dry corner in the midst of the glacial rain. We beheld a vapor all made of golden beads, a cloud in which a gentle smile hid itself away as in a beard, and we could approach, with our tin plates and cups in our hands. We knew that we were not wholly forgotten, and we received our portion of the food that saved us. We were no longer obliged to content ourselves with yawns, we could at last speak, and our voices were like the voices of men to whom some good fortune has happened. We were now really men again, men who had just arisen, and knew how to salute gayly the oncoming day.

“Hi, boys, warming up must be in it today, that crazy mess of a cook has stuck in the wrong ladle!”

And then the smiling eyes and smiling chins plunge, as if intoxicated, into the vapor rising from the tin plates, and a noise is heard like that made when the fire is stirred beneath a boiler and the pistons begin to move. It seems as if a solid and vigorous squeeze, as of a hearty hand-grip, enters our very beings, and we feel the warming up at work inside us, as a mason works busily from below to brace a tottering wall. Every bit of this good feeling comes from our stomachs, and our hearts hasten to share in it. When we again plunge out into the rain, we work our jaws, thinking that now we can hold our own. Some one is calling Pancrace. “Hey, old fellow, you always have to

be looked for. It takes a lever to pry you loose!" And then, from some corner off in the shadows, his voice reaches us. "Maybe it wouldn't split your throat if you called me Mister Pancrace!"

The house of Pancrace, in fact, was in a state of repair. While we were setting out, trudging along on our way and seeking it among the rocks with our iron-tipped staves, Pancrace suddenly bobs up near me and sighs, "If only my two gals could see their poor old father!" He was speaking of his wife and daughter, and chose a coarser and a commoner word to express what would have choked him to put into kindly, lovable phrasing.

Sometimes it happened that one happened to be at the right place at the right time, and could hold out his tin canteen. Now, a full canteen is no mere chance or commonplace acquaintance. You don't drink that down at a gulp, and standing up. The full canteen will be a comrade for a time, who makes his presence felt and who attracts attention. It's a rough joker, a frightful tease and, if I had to paint its portrait, I'd put in the joyous eyes of a vagabond, and a very bristly chin, and I'd expect to have people recognize, from this picture, a good old character ready to break into poetry at a moment's notice.

So, one day, we were holding out our canteens, myself and our sergeant. We were at the division kitchen which had been installed in position, and when we came back down the mountain paths the world looked lovely to us, full ripe for peace, and we signed peace with Italy that very day. It was after a frightful night. We had climbed high up, in the stormy darkness, but now not a shot was heard, and breathless silence ruled, as if everything were rooted to its place, as if every soul had covered his mouth with his hand and were lying stretched out on the ground, chin in hand, to watch the passing of the summer of St. Martin. From time to time we halted, where we found two rocks face to face. We had thus each one a seat, the sergeant and I, and we took advantage of every seat we found.

Above our canteens we exchanged smiles, we tipped back our heads, we drank generous mouthfuls, we praised the

merchandise, we smiled again at each other, and we greedily savored the silence about us. It was after the fourth mouthful, I believe, that the silence began to weigh heavily upon the sergeant.

"You see, old chap, those fellows seem to have had about enough of it."

His voice and smile emerged from his beard as from a forest. For a moment he looked about without speaking, and then abruptly resumed, as one throws a few twigs on a fire to save it from going completely out, "Perhaps you didn't hear about it. They were talking about it at the kitchen. A man who is candidate for section commander arrived with the news."

Certainly nothing like that had been heard of at the kitchen. That illy shaven fellow, you know—the spirit of warming up, was there, and that spirit has no trouble in finding followers! For that spirit, it was great fun to invent a thousand candidates like the one that was supposed to have brought the great news!

Now it was a fine autumnal day, one could look far over the country from where we were, and the mountains below us seemed like our great-grandmothers' shawls, and the eddying clouds covered it all.

"Well, it must happen, one day or another, don't you think? Why, yes! We'll put them—come, hurry up and boil the *knedlíky* (balls of wheat flour, cooked in water—a very popular dish in Czechoslovakia) with the sauerkraut! What do you say? Shall we embark at Taravísio or Krainburg? For my part, I think it will be at Taravísio."

"Yes, if the train isn't kept waiting here too long."

We had just set out again. The sergeant stopped when I uttered this unfortunate remark, and drew his finger across my forehead. "You must arrange all that when you get home. Do you hear even a single shot? No, you hear nothing. I tell you again, that candidate arrived with the news— See there! There are two fine little easy chairs for us, and just pipe that little cascade close by!"

This time we exchanged, over our canteens, a still more intoxicated smile, for beside us a mountain cascade, loveliest

of the lovely, was merrily laughing on its way. For a moment, the universe ceased to be insane, and if we two were mad, we were quite the opposite of everything else. What we had heard, though, was enough to make one mad. I no longer cut the sergeant short, and in spite of myself I abandoned my spirit to a wave of beatitude which flowed toward us from the peaceful autumnal sun. The sergeant was sitting facing me, his look become soft and gentle, and from his beard, as from a forest, a little elf seemed to escape, waving its cap joyously and crying, "Peace! Peace! Peace!"

Below, there among the hills, ran the thin white ribbon traced by the road, and on the road were moving outlines like those one sees in nurseries.

"When I get home, I say, I shall always be seeing this cascade and this road, but I shall never be able to tell any one how beautiful it was when peace came marching down the road, with the cascade running to meet her."

"Ah, you are right. It is inexpressible. It is—— Oh, thunder! Come along, let's join our comrades! They surely know more than we do about it!"

We took the road at a good pace. Our thoughts helped our legs along. We ceased to halt when we reached those little rocky seats. As we went along, we lifted our canteens to our lips. Whenever we met any soldiers, the sergeant threw to them, as we hastened by, his radiant vision of peace.

"Look that way, do you see?" he cried, suddenly, pointing to something well above us. "What did I tell you? Look, look, there it is, sure enough, the white flag!"

I could see nothing but what seemed whitish smoke, but perhaps it was really the white flag.

"Jesus and Mary, old fellow, there it is, there it is!"

The only thing which worried us was the road, which we found just like the military road of the night before. There was something new about it, though, after all, for along this road peace was approaching and we were the only ones who would see it come.

Suddenly, the air above us was covered with a resounding dome-like canopy. Against a big rock jutting out over the

road, a grenade had violently burst. Pebbles fell all about us, and the sergeant grew pale. His beard was shaken like a forest through which a horde of frightened wild boars are racing.

"Why—it's a mistake! You know very well that it can't stop all at once over the whole front! Wait! We'll try the telephone. You're crazy! It's all over! You'll see—there'll be no more firing!"

But they did fire, just the same. Above our heads they built a regular cupola made of resounding arches. We proved it, as we cautiously beat a retreat. And when at last, breathless, and running as hard as we could, we gained a bend in the road and were safe, we stopped to draw breath, and the sergeant tore in shreds his splendid vision, in a single cry of pain.

"The devil! One time—one time or another it's got to end! Got anything left to drink in your thing-a-ma-jig? Give me a swallow, I've emptied mine!"

SONIA

By OTTO RUNG

I

WHEN I knew the poet. Sven Hedlund—who was to die insane some ten years later in a private asylum near Copenhagen—he must have been less than forty years old. He might easily have been thought ten years older. Only his eyes had remained young.

His eyes were little, gray, very keen and fiery and deeply set below his prominent, thick and bushy eyebrows. They seemed to retreat there to lie in wait for the thousand things they were ready to seize upon. Hedlund's glances were sharp, vibrating and rapid as flying arrows and shot lightning flashes from the dark depths of the eyes. Except for these ardent eyes, though, the whole face betokened fatigue and premature old age. Pouches had formed beneath the eyelids. The muscles in the emaciated neck were thin, stiff, and taut. The shaven face was barred with two deep furrows, beginning at the corners of the mouth and extending to the nose on both sides, setting a big circumflex accent as a mark upon the whole countenance. The hair was not white but had become very scanty. The shoulders were sinking, and at times, in spite of Hedlund's determined resistance, collapsed and carried forward the yielding spine. Yes, Hedlund seemed at least fifty years old.

He was without cares and he had no material ambitions. A modest income, added to what he received at the Ministry of Public Instruction, permitted him to live without difficulty or uncertainty. He was a bachelor and his needs were simple. As a poet, he wrote little and chiefly to please himself. He cared nothing about success and had not the abnormal desire for fame which taints so many of our contemporaries. It mattered little whether he was worshiped as a great man or denied any talent at all.

Men cannot judge the productions and personalities of their own period, anyway, and their judgments always have to be revised by posterity. Hedlund was indifferent as to whether he was decorated with palms and ribbons or whether he was omitted altogether from the lists of famous names, for he lived in the offices where such lists were prepared and was quite familiar with ways in which the favored names were slipped into place. His works might be published, or might stay neglected in his desk. He wrote for the joy of writing, that joy which is purely egoistic. He was a real artist.

Well, then, if these worries did not trouble him, what were the grief and care which had left such traces on his face in spite of his real youth? Grief? Hedlund lived an intensely mental life. He was concentrated on books, painting, and poetry, and could have no secret vice or no hidden disease. Like all men, he had sudden temper fits, moments when he was assailed by physical passion. When such moments occurred, however, as after a very gay dinner with his friends, he had recourse for a brief moment to the ancient sisterhood and so cleared himself of passion for a time. He knew no other vice than this, and to it were limited all his amours, a fact which greatly intrigued his friends.

The prettier the woman, the more hostile his feeling toward her. But why this hatred, for this Hedlund's poems were full of passion and love—they were vibrant with them, and even with passion and sensuality. The best of them were voluptuous reveries, expressions of passion. What sorrow or grief was it which had removed such an eloquent lover from woman's sphere and limited his love to dreams and imagination? There was certainly some mystery here. Whatever it was, it was surely the cause which had aged Hedlund. Suffering had broken this man, who was becoming daily stranger and more gloomy.

We were both present one night at the close of a banquet offered by the Literary Society to an American delegation staying for a short time in Copenhagen. In the salons where the guests were dancing after dinner, there was a remarkably brilliant gathering of literary and artistic

folk. The women, in evening dress, with their bare arms, necks, and bosoms, and with their rouged lips and cheeks, were all a-glitter with pearls, rubies, and diamonds. Their eyes were glowing and bright, their hair was beautifully dressed, and they were perfumed and intoxicating. This lovely feminine throng was whirling about in the arms of the men, amid a thousand sparkling lights, dazzling flashes and reflections, in the midst of a great, voluptuous vortex. A sort of heavy haze in the air was pierced at every instant by light from the great candelabra in quick, golden stabs. These lovely creatures, these elegant women, were all beautiful, all desirable. They offered everything they had, baring freely their breasts and shoulders.

The men, correctly clad in evening black, made false grimaces behind their monocles, as their uneasy glances pursued the women. For those able to read faces, these salons full of *littérateurs*, savants and artists, among whom a few politicians were mingling, had become merely a huge amorous whirlpool as soon as the last addresses had been closed at the dinner table. The men, the women, and eternal desire now reigned.

Hedlund, of course, was shunning the salons. He had taken refuge at the buffet and, when I joined him, was drinking a great deal of champagne.

"Alone?" I asked.

"Oh yes, quite alone. Out yonder they are all running after the women, always irresistible and entrancing. Run along yourself and don't bother about me, old fellow. I can drink just as well if you are not here. Follow the crowd and do as all the black coats are doing."

"No, I prefer to stay with you."

"Just as you like. But there are some superb ones in the crowd, I assure you. Don't they interest you?"

"Less than you do."

"Ha, there, easy, easy! You can't make love to me!"

"Well, I can chat with you, can't I?"

"Yes, if you'll drink!"

"If you wish, rather than to whirl off——"

"Without drinking, of course——"

"With the women, however pretty they are?"

"Alas, they are very lovely," finished Hedlund, suddenly losing all his gayety. "Ah, how splendid they are, the miserable things, the unhappy beings! They are frightfully lovely!"

"You are not in the least exaggerating," I said, laughing, and added, for I saw that my curiosity had a chance of being satisfied, "but you are not really afraid of the women, even if you have not much love for them?"

"Who told you that I haven't much love for them?"

"Why, you yourself!"

"Ah! And you think I don't like them!" Hedlund emptied another glass of extra dry. "You think I am afraid of them. Well, it is true, especially on a day like today or a night like this one."

"Why tonight especially? All this sort of thing?" And I indicated the throng in the salons.

"No, not all this in particular——"

"Well, what, then?"

"What day is it?"

"It's after midnight, so it is the twenty-fifth, a date like any date."

"Like any date, you say!"

"It seems so to me."

"It's the twenty-fifth of February, then?" And Hedlund, who was beginning to be uncertain on his legs, said good night to me. His last words, though, had greatly intrigued me. Besides, he seemed more excited than usual, so I thought it a good idea to ask to go along with him.

"Go along with me?" he demanded, haughtily. "I am not drunk, sir!"

"No, I was just wanting to please myself. I shall be bored to death, here, all alone, after you leave."

"Bored to death here! Well, come along if you'd like to, come along, my friend. I am really a bit drunk, but I can keep my head. Come on. You are young yet, and I shall tell you strange things. You will see certain reasons—ah! There are things you want to know!"

I followed Hedlund out of the salons. We hailed a cab, and went to the street where Hedlund lived. We were quickly within the three modest rooms of his apart-

ment. The latter had been converted into a library, and the walls were lined with books.

On the way, Hedlund had got rid of some of the fumes of the champagne, and his head was clearer. On arriving home, he suddenly became very calm. He had me sit down before the fireplace in the room which served as his office and workplace, and stirred the low fire of wood which was waiting for him. He then got the silver teapot going for the tea, offered me a cigar and installed himself in a vast armchair just opposite me. When we were both comfortable, he recounted his story, as the hours slipped slowly away. Our cigars were finally consumed and dead, the smoke wreaths ceased to ascend, the silver teapot to hum, but the tale went on, until the early moments of the dawn. That was ten years ago and Hedlund has been dead for five, but I remember it all.

"My story," said Hedlund, "was at first very ordinary. I was, like many of the young students without home or family, exposed in all my youthful innocence to the dangers of the city and of the fullest liberty. I was twenty-four years old, then, and preparing for one of the higher examinations for promotion. One chilly evening I chanced to encounter a girl. Her eyes were swollen, and she was wandering about, quite alone, nervously gnawing a little lace handkerchief with which she mopped her eyes from time to time.

"She was very pretty, though her face showed great fatigue. Perhaps she was still prettier on account of her pale, weary face and big, burning, black eyes, softened by her tears. Her lips were trembling with sobs which she could not restrain, and the pearly tears were hanging on her long eyelashes. She made me feel sorry for her. I immediately suspected that her distress must be very great, and, without hesitating, for youth is generous and chivalrous, I approached her and asked, 'Why are you crying? Can I help you?'

"For a moment she looked at me with some distrust, but my voice showed evident sincerity, or else the girl could bear her grief no longer. Maybe she was obeying some mysterious force which had drawn us together in

the deserted gardens. At all events, whatever the reason, she took my arm as if I had been an old comrade of hers and replied, very simply, 'I am alone—and I am hungry.'

"I learned that her name was Sonia. How melancholy this name suggesting mists and gloom! Her father, Morovski, was one of those exiled Russians who, when entangled in the dark political history of his country, had fled to Finland and thence to Denmark, where he was tolerated like all the rest of those Russians, and closely watched by the police. You know how all that is. He had been a physician, journalist, propagandist and revolutionary. He had remained in close touch with his party, of course, who were secretly preparing in Russia for their 'Great Day.' His mother had died in bringing him into the world. She was an Italian whom Morovski had met, as Sonia said, from what small information she possessed, during a long journey to Milan, where her father had gone to live as a physician. The republican disturbances had obliged him to leave Milan, and he had settled down in Copenhagen, with his daughter. That is, he had settled down, but was waiting for events to occur.

"Sonia had been reared quite carefully. Her father had loved her tenderly. These revolutionary people, you know, are very warm-hearted. Sonia had been taught by her father himself. There was always money enough. It was a mystery, though, where it came from, though Morovski collaborated with many journalists, Danish and foreign.

"Well, the events occurred which we all know about. The attempts at a revolution, the affair of the priest Satrin, the *pogroms*—you remember all those things. Sonia was seventeen years old at that time. Morovski left Copenhagen one night, leaving some money with his daughter and telling her things which did not greatly surprise her, for her father made many such trips. He was probably called secretly to bleeding Russia on business of his political party. But this time he did not return.

"One evening, several months later, Sonia received an unsigned message containing only the words, 'Morovski dead for the cause, expect him no longer.' That was all.

Evidently members of Morovski's party wasted little time! The poor child was deserted, and without resources, for the little reserve left by her father had become exhausted.

"What was to become of this seventeen-year-old girl? She had no roots anywhere. She was more than an orphan, and without support, without a country, mere wandering flotsam. Her father, the only human being who loved her, had not admitted her to his political relations. She had no desire to ally herself with his wonderful Cause. She was just a poor little wild bird, lost from the nest, a poor, little, feeble, wounded heart.

"I had met her at this very period of her life. She had been compelled to leave her modest lodging for want of money. She did not know how she would live next day, or what shelter she could seek for the night. And, just like a little girl, all she could do was to weep and tear her handkerchief to pieces. I can still hear her voice, saying, 'I am all alone—and hungry.'

"She followed me, just as a lost dog accepts for its master the first stranger who pets it a bit. Ah, my friend, I assure you I respected from my heart the sorrow of this poor girl! Next day, she wouldn't go away. She was a true Russian, and accepted her fate, obeying the chance which had confided her to me, and not even questioning the outcome or thinking of other possibilities. And could I send her away? So she remained, that day and the days ensuing, sharing my modest quarters, my modest living. Well, of course, what could be expected of the situation?

"She was seventeen and I twenty-four. And she was pretty. One evening, throwing an arm about my neck, she awoke, quite unconsciously, a desire in me, which met her own uncomprehended desire. Our lips met and she murmured, 'I love, dear Sven, and I want to be your wife.' And so we became crazy, both of us.

"We were both young and fair like a god and a goddess. Sonia, Sonia!" and Hedlund stretched out his arms towards an invisible image, "my little Sonia, with the long, black hair, shining in long cascades rolling clear down her back, so milky white! Sonia, little Sonia, with the great mysterious eyes, the pearly throat! Sonia; little mixture,

strange daughter of fiery Italy and mystical Russia! Sonia! what delights and what great moments—ah, pardon my cry, my friend!” Hedlund’s voice, risen loudly in his emotion, fell to a subdued tone as he continued.

“Evidently, this great happiness could not last. We were too happy. I, though, did nothing to diminish it. It was poor Sonia herself who suddenly threw discord into our existence, for she became jealous—jealous, yes, indeed. Why? She had no reason whatever, but does jealousy ever seek reasons? And then, we must not forget that this daughter of Russia, fanatical enough to die for her faith and sacrifice her child as well, was Italian through her mother. In her a dual atavism existed, which this tale will probably render still clearer.

“A thing occurred one evening which had never happened before. I was obliged to leave her alone, to accept an invitation of old friends of my parents, who were getting irritated by my continual and clumsy excuses and neglect. When I came back, some time after the dinner, Sonia was in bed. She received me joyously and we talked hard, to make good our lost evening.

“I was sufficiently tactless, though, to say that I had got along fairly well because of the daughter of my host. The daughter was only eighteen and a distinguished pianist. She had played, that evening, several of Chopin’s studies, and I praised her highly. Sonia did not reply to my remarks on this subject, listening with apparent indifference. It was only several days later that I learned of the obscure workings of that little head of hers.

“At intervals, I noticed that the glance from her great, black, velvety eyes had hardened. She would remain silent and thoughtful for long moments and nothing could make her speak. Then, after these minutes of contained violence and internal wrath, she would clasp me in her arms, twine them closely about me, and kiss me passionately on the mouth.

“I did not ask her to explain these attacks. Was she not always, in my eyes, a little wild creature which had grown up unaided and in abnormal conditions? It was she herself who explained her bad moments. One day,

after having bitten my lip almost enough to make it bleed, she rolled herself on the floor at my feet and demanded, 'Does she really play the piano very well?'

"'Who?' I asked, surprised.

"'The other girl.'

"'What other girl?'

"'The pianist.'

"'What pianist?'

"'The pianist that you heard the other night.'

"'Why do you ask me that? Why, I haven't given a second thought to that girl.'

"'Yes, yes, I know all that—you just say that to satisfy me, and you will leave me some day for her, and very soon, perhaps. You'll marry her. And I tell you, I don't want you to get married, I don't want you to leave me, Sven, I want you all to myself. You know very well that you are all I have in this world.'

"'But my dear love,' I replied, 'I have never dreamed of leaving you or of getting married, you dear, crazy little girl!' My answer was perfectly sincere. I had truly never thought a day could come when I could leave her. I loved her, so why should I leave her?

"Sonia, though, failed to be convinced of my sincerity. She became madly uneasy, in spite of all my promises. Ah, what an existence that was! Mad, crazy, wrathful kisses, fits of anger, passionate clasping, sudden bursts of desire, mingled love and tears—poor little thing!

"One night, at my wits' end, I struck her, crying, 'Very well, then, I will leave you. Have it your way. You have guessed right. I'll marry the other girl. Now are you satisfied?'

"She did not seem to be aware of the blow. But she believed me. The lie was sufficiently gross and evident, but she believed it, and fell at my feet in a faint. That was our last scene. When she revived she asked no more questions. She returned my kisses when I kissed her. I took her in my arms. We spoke no more of the dispute. Sonia became gentle and docile again, and my caresses were all she needed to be happy. There was no more jealousy. 'I know you will love me forever,' she used to say, some-

times. But, when she said this, there was a strange light in her eyes which made me more uneasy than all her anger had done."

Here Hedlund stopped to lower the wick in the lamp. Beneath the lampshade, the light threw greenish gleams into the room. He scattered a handful of chips upon the fire, which burned up brightly for a few moments, then faded in its ruddy bed. Swallowing his cup of tea, which had become quite cold, at a single draught, he remained in a long moment of reverie, resting his head on his hand. It was about two o'clock in the morning. Not a sound was audible outside the house. I was chilly and cowered over the little fire. Presently Hedlund shook off his torpor and resumed.

"I don't know, my friend, whether you have ever had gloomy presentiments and forebodings. I don't know whether you believe in dreams and fancies, or invisible presences. I don't know whether you are interested or disturbed by the mysterious world which envelops us and shares our life, unbeknown to us. Perhaps you believe only in man, and think that he is the captain of his fate. Well, listen to me, now.

"One evening, it was the twenty-fifth of February, exactly fourteen years ago, Sonia and I were together. So we had gone to sleep, side by side on our disordered bed, Sonia's long, loose hair covering my breast.

"I had a very absurd dream. I thought I had left the earth and had arrived in some extraordinary region, both admirable and terrible. Nature was both frightful and full of charm. Great trees, whose foliage was like many-colored glass, and whose bark was luminous, twined their supple branches about giant flowers, from which heavy, perfumed wreaths of mist or smoke arose, as from immense saucepans. Gigantic, luminous insects were flying about, tracing vast, fiery circles in the air which surrounded lovely, exotic birds, of variegated plumage.

"No shade was cast by the leaves, which were transparent, upon the roads and byways paved with precious stones. Grasses blazed, level with the soil. The whole fantastic landscape was bathed in light. An immense sun filled the

heavens, and the warmth and the perfume rendered the atmosphere suffocating.

"In this fiery air, which oppressed the chest and burned the eyes and skin, one heard the crystalline splashing of invisible springs and saw cooling mirages. Light, silky zephyrs occasionally blew past, more enervating and voluptuous than the caresses of skilled fingers, and leaving on the lips droplets of an intoxicating liquor, perfumed with absinthe and honey. On thus entering this chimerical country, I found it a garden of torture. I was, and at the same time, crazy with joy and pain, drunk with passion and suffering, burned with ecstasy and regret.

"To flee was impossible. As soon as I tried it, I felt as if I were bombarded by kisses from a thousand mouths. I penetrated deeper and deeper ahead, through paths bordered with burning shrubs, and pricked with thorns which both tortured and tickled. I kept advancing in spite of myself, incapable of resisting the evil temptation to go on and on.

"On a road in which I somehow got lost, I encountered a woman who kept me in her power for several months. The enchantment was about to be broken, though, for the land where I was was becoming indistinct, the implacable light was darkening, the perfumes were ceasing to intoxicate, and I was caring no more for the burning thorns.

"The woman with me became aware, without any confidences from me, of my detachment from my surroundings. She saw that the country fascinated me no more, that I was weary of the painful joys, and that I wished to return to the serenity of my former life. The woman knew that the charm was broken, and that I was going away. Her beauty and lewd caresses could no longer hold me. Exhaustion had created disgust in me. Far away lay the land whence I had come, and which was calling to me.

"There all was gray, no doubt. There all was cloud and rain. There the bright colors, the perfume of the giant flowers, and the nectar of the strange land's absinthe and honey were absent. The land was simple and rude, but there one was free to engage in a daily and ardent struggle. There nature was conquered only by incessant effort.

There wine gave force and courage. That land was far finer than any sterile paradise. And thither I was to return, toward real life. I was impatient to be gone. I might encounter other sorrows, but these would at least not be merely empty and soulless.

"However, this woman had learned my desire—what mistress does not read her lover's heart?—and was determined to prolong my slavery. So she went to seek the sorceress who governed the infernal island where 'I was, to get a love potion capable of imprisoning me eternally."

"Eternally!" I exclaimed, in a low voice. "Like Tristram and Iseult!"

"Yes," replied Hedlund, hearing my remark. "Yes. The eternal madness of lovers." In a few moments he continued his story.

"The sorceress said to the woman: 'To keep him with you eternally—so be it. But I know only one way. Have you the courage required? Can you brave death?'

"'I can brave anything,' said the woman, 'and I should like to know an imperishable love.'

"'An imperishable love! Well, then, listen. If you desire your hearts to be united eternally, you must not only renounce life, but both of you must die in an embrace. Just as believers must gain heaven by being in a state of grace when they leave the earth, so lovers can remain always together only if they die in a state of mutual love. They really love only when their lips and flesh are united. Even the maddest lovers love thus for only a few minutes at a time, and their mad love ceases as soon as their union ceases. You must choose a moment like that. After death, as during life, everything is lies and deception. If you die thus joined to your lover, with your lips and heart, you will both belong to each other forever. Will you pay that price?'

"'I will,' said the woman.

"'Very well. Take this potion. You must crush the phial against your lover's lips with your mouth, and you will be the only couple made one forever.'

"The woman came back, with the precious talisman of love and death. I fell asleep, and she lay down beside me

and gently awoke me with gentle caresses. She drew me close to her. I could not resist, and yielded to her desire. Our kisses slowly mingled, and we were about to die in the midst of our delight. Some instinct, however, made me guess that death was near.

"I abruptly released myself and repulsed the woman with a violent blow at her face. The woman, killed by the sorceress' poison, fell inert at my feet. I awoke at that moment."

"What a strange dream!" I murmured, rendered rather uneasy.

Hedlund, his nails clenched against the arms of his chair, half lifted himself from it, and then sank back, panting.

"Ah, it was indeed a strange dream," he said, brokenly. "And that dream became reality, and I wondered if the dream itself had occurred, for, across the bed, and in the light of the still burning lamp, lay Sonia!"

"Sonia!" I cried.

"Yes, Sonia. Her head was thrown back, and her black hair was tossed behind. A thin stream of blood was escaping from her lips. Her eyes were wide open, the pupils fixed and dilated, as if she had been frightened by a horrible vision. Her mouth, filled with a light froth, gave forth a faint odor of bitter almonds. Sonia, Sonia! She was dead. Perhaps it was I who had killed her. She had dreamed of eternal love. There could be no doubt about what had happened.

"In a flash I understood it all. Sonia had bent over me and I had felt her, in spite of my sleep. Sonia had caressed me to awake my desire. She had caressed my lips with hers. And I had unconsciously struck her in the face, the face that was now swollen, at the very moment when death was to unite us eternally, according to the will of the mystical daughter of Russia and Italy.

"Next day, the physician coming to verify the death, also verified its cause—poisoning. For Sonia had crushed in her mouth a capsule containing potassium cyanide."

The night was heavily wearing away. I had been chilly before, but was now so cold that I could not keep my teeth

from chattering. But Hedlund, with a hoarse voice, continued:

"My story does not stop at this point."

"Well, then, my friend," I suggested, "you had better kindle this dying fire and start the tea to boiling. I am frozen."

"From cold?"

"Perhaps so."

He got the fire to blazing, I swallowed a cup of hot tea, and he resumed his talk.

"For some months I was pursued by the memory of that tragic night. I loved Sonia. I kept seeing her poor, swollen face, her eyes wide with fright and mystery and her frothy mouth reddened with the thin stream of blood. I freely admit that I trembled at the thought of that capsule of cyanide and of the death whose icy kiss had actually been at my lips. I lived quite solitary, seeking forgetfulness in my work, which had been neglected since my relations with Sonia. I was able to pass my examinations brilliantly in this way. But why should I, great heavens? Well, at that time I did not realize that my life was to be only a long fatigue and that all my force and elasticity were destroyed.

"After the examinations, I left Copenhagen, hoping to find a little rest and quiet in the country. I followed my mother, who was then still living, to the family dwelling, to seek the restful coolness of the place, and to get back an innocent soul. I wished to escape from the past, and rid myself of my memory as of an incumbrance. I hoped to cast off my old self and to attack the future confidently, by seeking a new love affair. In fact, is not love the only real force in life? Those who can no longer love are only empty forms and figures, illusions, phantoms, shadows. They can scarcely find strength to meet their common, daily tasks.

"The peace of the fields, the tenderness of the vast blue sky, and the beauties of the rural landscape gradually quieted my tormented heart. The tragic night began to grow fainter. I could consider myself freed. I allowed myself to be persuaded by my mother, who thought that

my melancholy was due to solitude, and began to think of the possibility of getting married.

"A neighbor, who had been an old friend of my father, and who was a wealthy grower of grapes, had a daughter who was charming, modest, simple, virtuous, docile, sweet and good. She was not very pretty, but fresh and rather humble. She was named Hilda. She was doubtless without worldly ways and had not much culture. She had merely got a little polish at boarding school. But she had all the domestic qualities enabling one's wife to aid her husband truly.

"Would it not be the very best thing for me to have a wife like that? With her little white apron worn upon her light-colored dress, she did not lack charm when, after the housework, she went about with her discreetly curled hair, her decent smile and timid eyes. On the piano she tinkled out the old, familiar airs of the operas and of sentimental songs which, in our rural surroundings, were saved from stupidity by their ingenuousness.

"The idyl was a peasant's one. I let myself go. I had such great need of purity and simple romance! I drank fresh milk every morning to restore my affected stomach. Why should not Hilda, so pink and blond, be the milk to quiet my burning heart? I saw her frequently. She loved me, and we became engaged without the least resistance on my part. My mother was delighted. Hilda was a dear child, the only child of a rich man.

"When once engaged, we could do as we pleased. We pleased. We could stroll about unattended, all gossip was forestalled. Besides, every one had confidence in me. Sonia's story had not penetrated to this region.

"One evening, while Hilda's parents were playing interminably at cards with my mother, the dear girl and I went to sit down under a trellis in the garden. We were not speaking. What was there to say? But I held her hands, trying not to let my thoughts stray away. Dear me, she was very sweet, the poor child, her slight figure dim in the shadows. I was aware of her submissiveness, her mute and timid adoration, that of a simple young girl who does not even demand that she be made love to. It was

enough for her simple soul that I held her hands. As a faithful and devoted wife, a very little tenderness would suffice to make Hilda happy. Such happiness was easy to secure. As for me, would not a life without passion or tumult be much the better one? My life might be quiet, simple, monotonous and ordinary, but it would be safe, and not without minor joys. And the small joys? Yes, my mother was clearly right.

"Hilda had dropped her head on my shoulder. Through the foliage the moonlight was caressing her blond hair, resting on it like a white halo. I slipped my arm about her waist and my hand imprisoned her little breast, which was erect and firm beneath the light cloth of her dress.

"Hilda lifted her eyes to mine and their glance confessed her love, dimly in the semi-darkness. It also revealed desire! She had never before allowed me to see that the woman in her was awaiting a lover's caress. Our lips had never yet foreshadowed other thrills. But this evening my fiancée stretched toward me a face with a prayer! Her eager look attracted me, her half-open lips called to mine. My little fiancée was indeed very pretty at that moment. I yielded and bent toward her, ready to cull the first kiss from her lips.

"But at that very moment, through a space in the trellis a ray of moonlight struck full on Hilda's face, which appeared grimacing and frightful to me, all black and white, the eyes fixed and like enamel. I saw no longer the simple peasant girl, my betrothed, but that other one, my dead Sonia, with the convulsed face, empty eyes, twisted mouth and swollen lips! Ah, the lips, the lips especially—black, thick, too large and stretched toward me with their little thin streamlet of blood!

"Sonia, Sonia! She had come back in the form of the little country girl. She had come back, the better to fool me with her innocent air! She had come back to impose upon me the fatal kiss, come to crush against my mouth the poison of the sorceress!

"I straightened up suddenly, trembling with fright and horror and brutally repulsed my fiancée, who fell in a faint. As for me, I fled and never went back.

"That is all," murmured Hedlund, after a few seconds of silence, painfully rising to extinguish the lamp, whose greenish light was fading in the gray rays of the early dawn. "That is all, and here is a new day which will bring me no joy. Since those days of my betrothal, now so far away, I have ceased to try escaping from my horrible obsession. Women's lips. Smiles and love, you say? For me all that is a lie. Do women's lips bear perfumed flowers formed of the breath of the soul? For me they bear lies and deception. Their smiles end in fierce chuckles, their kisses have the taste of death. I cannot see a woman's mouth without trembling with fright. Ah, it is absurd, I know, but it is stronger than my will. Sonia is always with me. The sorceress was right. I am eternally imprisoned since that dreadful night. For how can I ever love a woman, yet never have her kisses? There you are, my friend! The only girls and women I know are those poor creatures whom we pay. One does not kiss them! Why have I not died, do you ask? Why, I have kept hoping, just the same, that it would be possible for me to be happy. It is madness. Who can escape his fate?"

POPI AND HUHUU

By FRIEDEBERT TUGLAS

I

THIS morning the master woke very early. A little greenish-gray light entered through the round window-panes. The room was still dark and the master lit the candle in the brass candlestick. He put on a red jacket and blue trousers, violently coughing as he did so. Then he drew on his shoes and wrapped himself in a dark dressing gown which fell clear down to the ground. As he fastened his shoes, a severe spell of coughing overcame him.

He sighed, took out a necklace of red and black beads and began to pass them between his fingers, his lips gently moving.

From his bed, Popi looked on at his master's movements with his moist brown eyes. He knew the odor of those beads. They seemed to be smooth and tender, and did not please Popi at all. The master's face looked always sad and unwell whenever he rolled the beads.

The master suddenly stopped short and fixedly looked at the candle flame. His head, white as snow, was bent forward and his trembling fingers were joined together. The candle wick continued to burn and then began to smoke, but the master did not notice it.

He had recently become very strange. He had been coming home late at night, would sit down near the light, would break his bread, but forget to eat it, and would only hold the bit of bread in his hand and talk to himself.

At night, Popi had been hearing his master sighing deeply in his sleep. Now he got up and approached his master. He wagged his tail, licked his poor master's hands, and sought to console him in his anxious, canine way. But the master paid no attention. He seemed to be having horrible dreams, like the dreams he, Popi, had when he

dreamed of wandering along strange roads full of wild, mad dogs he did not know.

The master sighed again, rose, put on his leather cap with the big button on top, put out the light, and stooped down to pat Popi's back. "No, no, no," he murmured, caressingly, slowly stroking the dog's soft head. Popi stretched himself out beneath that kindly hand, again wagged his tail, yawned and put his tongue out, very far indeed.

How good he was, this dear old master, when thus sitting before Popi, his dark dressing gown falling in folds upon the floor! Popi could just make out his pale smile in the shadows of the early morning. Now the master rose and went to the corner where Huhuu's big cage was standing. "What does he have to go there for?" thought Popi, enviously, as he ran to his master's side, wagging his tail furiously all the time.

But the master didn't give anything to Huhuu, as Popi had feared he would do. He only shook his finger at Huhuu, saying, in a tone of remonstrance, "No, no, come here, you!" Huhuu had just waked. He was very sleepy and seemed to be shivering. He rubbed his shoulders against the cage and held the back of his neck in his hand. As the master shook his finger at him, Huhuu growled with his deep, guttural voice.

Then the master put on his coat. Popi ran in front of him towards the big market basket which was hanging on the wall, but again the master did not notice him. With his head bent forward, he walked toward the door. Outside it was growing lighter. Through the open door one could see a crenelated wall, a slender, narrow tower and the green sky in the background.

The master closed the door in Popi's very face. Popi heard the master walking slowly through the court, heard the outer door open, and then heard it close. Then all became silent again. For some moments Popi remained just behind the closed door, one ear pricked up, his head perked on one side, to listen. But he heard nothing at all, and left his post by the door. Popi was disappointed. "He isn't bringing any meat today," he thought. "He

hasn't brought any for several days. And it would be so easy, too!"

He took several objectless turns about the room. His toenails scratched the smooth floor as he walked over it. His long tail and the tip of his muzzle almost touched the smooth, waxed floor. It was still so dark that his twisted knees collided with the furniture and other things within the room. He could smell the familiar odor of old leather and furniture. Many other things beside recalled to him the amiable memories he had of his master.

It was yet too dark, too cold and too gloomy to stay awake. Popi returned to his bed on the floor and lay down snugly. It was so good to be in bed, to warm himself through and through, to crouch well together and to dream. Now, he thought, the master is going through the streets, among many streets, many houses and many masters. But no house is as good as this one and no master as good as mine. He opened one eye and looked about. Outside it was really getting light. Two rows of dull window-panes were colored a rosy red. Shadows were visible now on the floor.

"My master is better than any other master in the world," drowsily thought Popi, and closed his open eye. His master's goodness had, clearly, no limit. He might go out with an empty basket, but he always brought it back full of meat. Who would do that except the master?

Popi opened his eye again. The room was still lighter. It was now so light that the crocodile skin, impaled against the ceiling, was distinctly visible. It formed a dark mass above, the feet wide apart and the jaws gaping. Popi knew very well that the animal was dead and tranquilly closed his eyes again. His master was the only one he knew anything about, he reflected. He liked to go on an occasional stroll with his good master. It was great fun to plunge in among the enormous crowds filling the roadways and choking the market places. All these strangers, though, could not be trusted and the master could be sure of keeping Popi only by never letting him loose from his leash.

How had it happened that he had found so good a master? Oh, the answer to that was not difficult. It was because

he, Popi, was good himself. He had deserved to have a good master. Bad street dogs always have bad street masters. What chance had brought him to this house? He knew nothing of his past. It seemed to him that he had always existed. His present moments, though, all ended suddenly as if against a blank wall, and he could hardly remember further back than yesterday.

He had not noticed his own growth at all. He thought, though he was very doubtful on the point, that his paws had once been softer and his skin and hair more supple and elastic than they were now. That must have been at the time when the world seemed so queer, when he could not tell living things from inanimate objects, and when he used to wag his tail in front of the furniture. All that was very far away, inconceivably far away!

It was so good to reflect and dream! It was almost as good as living, or, perhaps, even better than living. In dreams, you see, the master was always good to him and cross to Huhuu, and there was always plenty to eat, more than he could eat.

He woke suddenly because a flea was biting him in the middle of his back. He made an enraged bite at the place. Then he stretched out and yawned. He had slept for a long time. The room was now filled with bright golden light. The upper half of the window, bearing six diamond panes, each one framed in tin or pewter, was open. It allowed one to hear the chattering of the sparrows just outside.

Popi took several turns about the room, sniffed at the floor, tested the air of the room, then went to the door and finally felt sure that his master had not yet returned. He had been absent for a long time, indeed. Popi strolled about some more, his pointed muzzle continuing to sniff at the floor. His feet were not bearing his head, it was rather his head which was dragging his feet along, so close to the floor and so far forward did his sharp nose protrude in front of him. He scratched at the sideboard, at the base of the wall, at the little recess near the window and at the bookshelves.

He smelled the same old odors which were new every

morning and always taught him something. It was strange that all these objects, seeming so much alike, were really so different. Inside the sideboard he could smell old pewter plates and pots. In the little recess he could detect the old bagpipe, the brushes, the bellows and the two big beer mugs of different shape. Near the books he could make out the odor of leather, of the insects that ate the leaves of the books, and the smell which he always knew meant Jews.

The best odors, though, were those of the kitchen. Popi followed his muzzle out to that famous place. His long tail glided through the open kitchen door as a serpent might slip along. The kitchen was high and narrow. In the middle there was a square iron stove with a big stove-pipe above, which grew narrower and narrower as it mounted towards the ceiling. On the stove there were pots, pans, kettles, flatirons and many things which stood out like so many dark spots.

Popi raised his muzzle and moved his moist nostrils to and fro. The kitchen unmistakably smelled of soot. The faint piping of birds was audible through the chimney and stove-pipe. There were many good-for-nothing odors in this place. They were not those of food or of anything else a body had any use for. It was here that the master sometimes melted lead or copper, or cooked queer porridge which he neither ate himself nor gave to any one else. There were green jugs, small kegs, platters, pewter bottles, pitchers and jars, little, long-handled stew-pans, and iron utensils of all sorts.

Here and there, happily, Popi could get a sniff of delicate odors of cheese, fat and meat. He smelled them through covers placed over different pots and vessels. From the kitchen table he got smells which made his nostrils vibrate violently and caused his little heart to beat like mad. He could smell out a mixture of earth, grasses and water. In one corner he recognized the odor of squashes, of melons, of cabbage, of artichokes, of carrots and of tomatoes. He found that this odd mixture came out of a basket full of different vegetables, piled in it pellmell.

Popi had had enough of the kitchen and trotted back

to the other room. He stopped in the middle of it, quite suddenly, as if something had occurred to him requiring a special effort of his memory. Huhuu made an abrupt movement and then Popi remembered what he had almost forgotten. His master was not at home. Huhuu moved about again, and another idea occurred to Popi. Perhaps his master was in the back room, asleep, or sitting silently beside the table. So he hurried into the back room.

In this room the windows were quite different from those of the room in front. They had very wide sashes, which were filled with tiny, many-colored panes set in pewter. The panes were of all sorts of different shapes and sizes. When the sun was shining brightly, the light passing through these little panes and falling upon the floor, the walls and the furniture made beautiful spots of lilac, purple, olive-green and soft crimson everywhere. The spots were shaped like men's heads, sheep, flowers and stars.

Popi had formed the habit of resorting to this room in the evening to get warm. Each particular color supplied a special degree of heat. Popi lifted up his muzzle and looked at the panes with his shining eyes. He found that there was a separate odor for each separate color. In a corner of this room, under a red canopy, from which were suspended heavy fringe and dull golden acorns, was placed the master's bed.

The room was nearly filled and running over with articles of furniture. Every kind of furniture imaginable was heaped together, so that walking about in the room was impossible. There were big wardrobes, with mosaic doors, huge leather chairs, old clocks still in excellent order, marking the hours, days and months and showing representations of earth and sky. Old spinets stood against one wall. Music desks and racks, ancient guitars, Hebrew books with iron clasps, steel helmets, swords, glass mirrors, metal looking-glasses, rugs, cushions, and costumes in gold and purple, helped to complete the hodge-podge within the room.

From the ceiling, hung the model of a boat, covered with gilding and bearing carven figures of men, sitting in

two rows on the desk. On the poop another man, in a red fez, was standing erect and pointing to the distant horizon. In the middle of the deck, among the other men grouped there, was a king, sitting on his throne, wearing a crown on his head and holding an apple and scepter in his hand. Popi often looked attentively at this model, with lifted muzzle and body crouched close against the floor. The model seemed to be a real thing. There was something extraordinarily lifelike about it.

However, many of the things in this room were extremely deceiving. As a matter of fact, it contained mostly visions, dreams and fancies. Here there were masters who were not masters at all. Elsewhere there were dogs, horses and birds which did not really exist. The food in the room never made any one hungry. This food was as unsatisfying and unreal as the food Popi dreamed about. It was painted on panels and canvases enclosed in frames which were slowly dropping to pieces. Some of the pictures represented odd corners full of skinned animals, entrails, lungs, tongues, heads and hides. Others showed tables bearing lambs, geese, swans, turkeys, trout, herrings, eels and shrimps. Still other paintings presented cornucopias full of tomatoes, parsley, onions, asparagus, artichokes, pumpkins and cabbages. Vines and grapes, fauns with cloven feet and wearing clumsy sandals, and nymphs running away somewhere also shone out from some of the canvases.

A large tapestry represented a hunting scene. Young men with mandolins were looking at young girls holding doves, and in the air were peacocks and parrots. One picture showed churches, windmills and wood-sawyers. A dense forest lay close to a frozen marsh covered with a scanty fall of snow.

Each phantom was in its own place, all the masters with dreamy faces were smiling from the walls, everything suggested reality, but the real master was not there. Popi approached the bed. He sniffed at his master's dressing gown and his nightcap, and wagged his tail. These things recalled his master to him so vividly that, when he closed his eyes, the familiar smells almost made his master visible.

However, it was all only illusory and deceptive, and Popi went sadly back to the front room.

Here the sun was shining through window-panes shaped like the necks of bottles. A golden dust was floating about Huhuu's cage. The room was perfectly still. The sparrows were no longer chattering. Popi felt very uneasy all of a sudden. He began to hurry hither and thither in the room, never stopping, uttering plaintive cries, as if he were a lost and deserted child. Why didn't his master come back? He asked himself this question over and over. Where was he staying all this time? He had never been gone so long before. Where was he? Where was he? Popi sat down on his flat little bed, folded his tail about his legs, listened, listened, whined in a very low tone and his back bristled up and his skin shook all over as if he were shivering with cold.

II

Time passed, and still the master did not return. Noon was gone already. Still the master did not come. The sun marched over to the other side of the room. Its rays now touched the windows only obliquely and left them dark. Still, still the master did not come.

Huhuu began to move about uneasily in his cage. He seemed to be suffering from hunger. He gnawed the bars of the cage, stuck his paw out between them clear to the elbow, picked up a few stray leaves of lettuce from the floor of the cage and greedily put them in his mouth. The way he held himself crouched together was very, very strange. His face was close to the bars of the cage and his two thin paws were held out like those of an old woman holding a skein of yarn to be rolled into a ball.

Popi, his head well bent over, turned his shining eyes on this companion of his. His eyes wandered to those paws of Huhuu. Who was Huhuu, anyway? He had asked himself this question before. He had no doubts about himself. He was always surely himself. And he knew the master, too. He knew other dogs and masters, who were strangers. But who was this Huhuu, sitting there

holding a lettuce leaf? Those fingers were thin, soft and black as coal. They made Huhuu look as if he were wearing specially fine gloves. His entire body was covered with grayish-brown hair. The skin at the back of his neck was stiff, and Huhuu often held his paw there as if he had a headache.

His face was also covered with hair, and to such a degree that it was impossible to tell whether he was gay or sad. His thoughts could never be read at all. He sometimes looked straight in front of him for hours, his gaze never ceasing to be fixed and unwavering. His temper was evidently very bad, otherwise he would not always be shut up in his cage. He was never taken out-of-doors and probably knew nothing at all of the streets, marketplaces or of any other master. Popi found, on the whole, that he deserved no more than he got. He was kept in his cage quite justly. Even his food was much worse than the food Popi received. They gave him nothing but green vegetables, fruit, and other inedible things.

It was odd, though, how much Huhuu resembled the master. Like the master, he walked erect, or nearly so, and had hands and fingers. Who was he? A second master, perhaps? Could he be a malicious, sly and evil master who had to be always kept in confinement?

Hunger was now really tormenting Popi. He stirred himself, went to his porcelain bowl and took a bone from it. There was no longer any meat on the bone, but Popi could gnaw it, at any rate, and help to pass the time away. So he gnawed away for some moments, crouched flat on the floor, holding his bone between his forepaws. All the satisfaction he got, though, was a mouth full of water, so he left his bone on the floor, raised his muzzle, and looked at the window. Anguish, and a vague and terrible presentiment oppressed his heart.

Suddenly the sun disappeared behind a cloud. The room became yellow, and then ashen gray. The wind whistled loudly in the chimney several times, and two or three large raindrops struck against the window-panes. Popi uttered loud and plaintive barks, raising his forepaws one after the other, bending them and relaxing them as if he had

chilled them by sitting for a long time on ice. This horrible cold silence lasted for some moments. Only Popi's gentle whining was heard in the room.

Huhuu had seated himself and was listening. Then, suddenly, he stood up straight, strutted across his cage, then jumped up and down on his four elbows, stopped, listened again and burst out into a sinister laugh, jumping about until his bones fairly clattered together. Popi was much frightened at this, and contracted his big, drooping ears close to his head. How very disquieting all this was! How very disquieting! Where could the master be?

Huhuu began to run about his cage, grasping now one bar of the cage, now another, and shaking them violently. A few yellowish, feathery clouds were passing across the sunlight and the light within the room was continually changing. All that Popi could see in this ashen sort of twilight was the odd way in which Huhuu's dark shadow was projected here and there.

The door-frame of Huhuu's cage suddenly snapped and gave way. Huhuu remained within the cage for a moment. The wind was roaring at the windows. Then Huhuu gave his door a push, and it opened. Huhuu was frightened. He had not expected such a thing and did not know what to do. He approached the open door and sat down at the threshold, waiting very prudently until he could well reflect, holding firmly to the frame of the doorway.

From his bed on the floor Popi, frightened at all this, looked up at Huhuu. He was half sitting up, his hind legs drawn well up in front and his skin very taut. Huhuu's astonishment remained only a moment. He slipped his chest forward, pressed his chin down on his chest, turned up his tail and, still sitting on his haunches, dragged himself towards Popi by two little steps. Then he suddenly strutted up again, coughed and jumped.

Popi disappeared under the sideboard like a tennis ball, howling as he went. He had to lie down, for the sideboard was low, and close to the floor. His heart was beating so hard that his nails clicked against the floor, although he was holding himself perfectly still. All was silent for some moments. Then he saw and heard Huhuu walking about

on his soft paws, heard him stop, and then all was silent again. Popi carefully slid up to the edge of the sideboard, to see what was going on. Evening was falling outside, and twilight was creeping into the room.

In the middle of the shadowy expanse was crouched Huhuu, gnawing a lettuce leaf, which he held in his hands. It did not take him long to swallow the lettuce leaf. Then, looking about him, he discovered the great purple rug hanging above the door of the back room. He approached the rug, pulled its fringe and drew it toward him. The rug fell down and covered Huhuu up in it. He was frightened, groped about within the rug for a while, finally dragged himself out and crept away, glancing back with distrust at the rug as he fled from it.

He began a search for food. On the table he found a few beans, and ate them. Then he went to the threshold of the kitchen door, and was soon investigating the basket of vegetables. Popi heard him gnawing at the carrots. Then Huhuu seemed to have another idea. He seized the basket by the handle and dragged it into the other room, where he spilled its contents out on the floor. Pumpkins, melons and tomatoes rolled pellmell everywhere.

Huhuu sat down in the midst of it all and ate away, first attacking the apples and then trying the cabbages. Popi was only a few paces away, his chin pressed down on the chilly floor and his two forepaws placed beside his chin. His frightened thoughts were much upset and confused. He stared hard at Huhuu with his violet eyes and the skin at the back of his neck bristled up rigidly.

Huhuu soon ceased to eat and began to roll a large pumpkin across the floor. The room, growing darker in the twilight, was quite silent except for the noise made by the rolling pumpkin, and the pattering of Huhuu's paws. The pumpkin rolled under the table and Huhuu lost it in the darkness. He stopped. The room was becoming very dark, and he seemed afraid.

Through the rosy panes of the window of the back room the setting sun was now throwing only a few feeble gleams. This room was lighted best at evening. From it a beam of pale, faint rays entered the front room through

the open doorway. Huhuu stood on the threshold of the back room, waiting cautiously. Then he made a few steps within it, and Popi saw his thin, hairless tail disappearing beyond the door sill. The rustling of garments could be heard, then Huhuu laughed aloud several times, and then everything was quiet.

Popi waited for a long time, his heart beating hard with fear. However, everything remained perfectly calm. So he gently came out from under the sideboard and slowly approached the entrance of the back room. Through the parti-colored window a narrow beam of dark red and deep violet light was entering the room. Huhuu was sitting on the master's bed beneath the red canopy. He had wrapped himself up in the master's dressing gown, had put the nightcap on his head, had pulled up the collar of the gown about his ears, and was fast asleep.

Popi remained motionless for some moments, lifting his muzzle toward the bed, and looking at Huhuu intently. Then he glided back beneath the sideboard, seeking the remotest corner he could find. Everything was whirling about within his little brain. Some frightful dream, some ghostly fancy, was revolving before him. He crouched as flat as he could below the sideboard, trembling with dread.

What had happened? He did not know at all. Something very unusual, very disquieting and very incomprehensible was surely occurring. How and why had it come about? Popi sought to recall the different events. The master had gone out. He had sat down to wait for the master. The sun had set, the wind had risen, the room had become yellow, and Huhuu had escaped from his cage. Had all this really occurred? What had happened later in the yellow twilight? Who had pulled the purple rug down on the floor? Where was Huhuu? Was it Huhuu who was sitting under the red canopy in a yellow gown and red cap?

Now it was quite dark, in the room and outside as well. The wind was blowing about the doors and windows. The rain was beginning to crackle, first slowly, then falling harder and harder for hours. Where was the master now?

thought Popi. Where had he gone? When would he come back?

All night long Popi kept his vigil by the icy wall, trembling with fear and cold. He listened to the mournful beating of the rain and waited, waited for his master. But still the master did not come. He would never come.

Toward morning, Popi dropped asleep for a little while. He dreamed that it was evening and that he was with the master in the street outside the house. The sky was covered with ashen-gray clouds. The dark streets grew darker and darker as they stretched away in the distance. Popi did not know where they had come from. They had been wandering for a long time. After the street came the marketplace, after the market there was another street, but they seemed never to arrive at the house. Popi was trembling with fatigue, wavered from one twisted leg to another, and tottered about in these endless muddy streets. It was indeed very strange to see everything so gray and deserted.

The master was walking ahead, his head forward and his back bent. He seemed very tired as he led Popi onward with the leash. He did not stop or look behind him. How much smaller and thinner the master was! His black coat was dragging along the ground and his head could not be seen at all under his leather cap.

Popi was becoming more and more weary with this long walk. He dragged his tired feet behind his master. The leash was now stretched taut as he pulled upon it and his master's hand was drawn far behind. The master continued to walk along without stopping or looking behind. In the twilight, Popi looked at his master's hand. It was small and hairy. The fingers were black as coal and their nails were very long. Popi suddenly felt a strange uneasiness. Where had they come from? Where were they going to? Who was it at the other end of the leash? Was it the master?

In the midst of the gray and forsaken street a nameless fear tugged suddenly at Popi's heart. His whole body was trembling, and he could walk on no longer. That man who was leading him kept pulling him along without stop-

ping or looking behind. They advanced a few steps more. Popi's strength was now rapidly failing him. He was dragging more and more at his leash. His collar was compressing his throat. The skin on his forehead was so wrinkled up that he could hardly keep his eyes open.

With a sudden access of terror, he realized that the man ahead was not the master. He stiffened his paws against the pavement and clung to the cold stones with clicking nails. The leash was almost pulling his head off.

The man ahead now turned for the first time to look behind. Popi saw his face. With a plaintive cry, he leaped from under the sideboard into the middle of the room, trembling in every nerve. At the very same instant, he saw the master standing at the threshold of the room, his hand upon the doorknob, dressed in his everyday clothes, his nightcap on his head.

Popi looked hard at him for a few brief moments, completely bewildered by this sudden quick moment of happiness. But suddenly the hair bristled up stiffly on his neck and infinite anguish came into his eyes. The face he saw was the one he had seen when the man turned round in his dream!

Their life together began from that day. The reality was more fantastic than Popi's dream, and was a dream more terrible than reality. Popi could not tell where the boundaries of his life ended and where those of the dream began. He could no longer separate the two and lived from day to day, trembling between the two extremes of his existence. When he awoke in the morning, saw the sun shining into the room, and felt new strength within him, he still hoped to escape this ghostly existence.

The old master will come back to the house, he thought. He will subdue Huhuu, put him back in the cage, and the happy life of old will begin again. This hope was vain. He soon heard the sharp cry made by Huhuu, coming from another room, and then Huhuu himself appeared at the threshold. He wore a new costume every day. He opened the wardrobes, rummaged about in the sideboards and put on any clothes which pleased him. He strutted for hours before the mirror, like a child at play. Placing three

mirrors in a corner, he examined himself now from before, now from behind.

He poured hair oil over his back and rubbed his face like a woman applying cosmetics. Then he turned his back toward the mirror and squinted his eyes around to see the back of his neck. He was as gay and happy as a child. At such times he was good-natured, and Popi could scent, without danger, the remains of food left upon the floor. Huhuu would not incommode himself for anything.

He had a strange taste in selecting clothing. He sometimes put on three coats, one over the other. Sometimes he put the overcoat on first, and the shirt outside. Sometimes he put on nothing whatever except a hat upon his head and a lace collar around his neck. Sometimes he appeared in a black velvet coat with wide sleeves, striped collar, big shiny buttons and a dagger at the waist.

Again, he was clad like a comedian in a dark red coat, beneath which a fat belly was protruding, on his head a bright-red, three-cornered hat, the three tips ringing like little bells. He might appear, dressed like the king of the little model of the boat, in a purple mantle, trimmed with fur, and provided with a long train and a heavy chain about the neck. And lastly, he sometimes showed himself abruptly, seeming like a corpse brought to life in a yellow linen tunic, with a black cross upon his breast and a hood pulled down over his forehead.

All these costumes were worn without the slightest care or pains. He tore them fiercely, snatched them from his body in an hour, and left them lying forgotten on the floor. He was continually discovering things which interested him. He was always eating. He opened the closets in the kitchen and took out all the food within his reach. He gnawed the biscuits. Scraps which remained he threw on the floor. It was these scraps which formed Popi's food during those dark, gloomy nights when he ventured outside his corner, slipping furtively along by the wall. Huhuu liked vegetables best. He stuffed his mouth with loose tobacco and all sorts of spices. He liked those things. The saliva dripped plentifully from his mouth and he spat about him like a sailor.

He passed his days in play. He gathered together bright balls, pretty things, knives, forks and spoons, and placed them all on the purple rug. He rolled the whole collection for hours between his fingers, as a child plays with pebbles. From time to time he tried working at the table. But he had not the perseverance of the old master. He broke the spectacle lenses to pieces, smashed the base of the terrestrial globe, and tore the books to bits.

He would sit down on the floor to unroll a lot of parchments, but instead of examining them with his eyes he would try them with his teeth. Then he would throw the roll of parchments away as a thing of no value. He broke the great wall clock to bits. He smashed the hands and tore out all the mechanism. Shading his eyes with his hand, he carefully examined all the little wheels and the rest of the movement. He destroyed everything he touched. He injured the pictures, the windows and the mirrors. He took away from the walls, and removed from the drawers, everything which he could reach. He left nothing untouched.

He seemed to be just like the old master and yet quite different. He might easily have been good and kind, but he did not wish to be. He was simply malicious and ill-tempered. He was most terrible at evening, after the fatigue of the day. He then delighted in tormenting Popi, and his malice was unbounded. He chased poor Popi across the room, threw kitchen utensils at him and pricked him with skewers when he fled under the furniture. He hit him on the head with a stick, threw liquids all over him and pierced his ears. All Popi now did was to whine and cry with fear and pain. Sometimes he tried to resist. From beneath the sideboard he snapped his teeth fiercely, yapped loudly, and growled at the skewer with which Huhuu was pricking him. All his efforts and resistance were vain. His sole refuge was the sideboard. The sideboard was so low that his legs became more and more twisted from his visits to its shelter. Since he often had to flee very quickly under it, the skin on his neck and back became torn and finally very sore. The food that he had was utterly insufficient, and he suffered all day long from agonizing thirst.

His restless sleep was filled with dire fancies and his

dreams only restored the reality. His brain was darkening. His memory became feebler and feebler, and he could no longer distinguish between the past and his dreams. Every connection with former times was lost. Now he retained only a faint memory of his happy past life, his good master and the remote and vanished golden age through which he had lived. His memories were like phantoms. They were only dreams and floating images.

How long ago was it that he had seen the old master? An infinite period had passed since the master had gone away. Was it today, yesterday, or months or years ago that he had departed? More and more did he forget the face and voice of the good old master, as they disappeared in the mists on the far horizon.

In dreams, though, he could see him more clearly. There he could make out his snowy, white hair and his gentle smile. At such times he would wake up, thinking that his master had called him. When he was awake, though, only the reality was about him. All that existed were the malicious master and the devastated room.

From time to time, he had the expectation that somebody would come. He did not know whether it would be the master or somebody else. Sometimes he heard voices penetrating the walls. Sometimes he perceived the sound of heavy shoes, outside in the street, but nobody came.

He became satisfied with the new master. He became habituated to fear and respect. He was old, sick and foolish and the present master would do very well. He knew fully that it was Huhuu. He could have identified him by his odor, had other signs been lacking. He was losing his faith in odors, though, as he had lost it concerning other things. His sense of smell was getting weak and he was no longer sure about odors. Everything was deceiving him, even odors!

His two masters became confused in his mind. They melted into a single individual. Each formed only a half of the whole person. As he had once admired the goodness, kindness and beauty of his old master, he now admired the malice, capricious humor and ugliness of his new one. The new master was almost the exact opposite of the old

one in everything, though he possessed a hidden intelligence and ability which Popi did not have.

The old master used to enter and leave by the door. The new master did so by the window. He would leap upon the table, climb to the window and disappear. While Popi was waiting for him to come back he would stay in the middle of the room, astonished. Huhuu sometimes remained away for hours. Popi had no idea what he was doing. The absence of the new master, though, seemed just as mysterious and important as the absences of the old one had seemed. Sometimes Huhuu dragged outside the house garments, books and cushions, bringing back in their place sticks, empty bottles and tiles. He filled the cupboards with straw and poured water from a jug into the interior of the room from the window.

His conception of the values of things seemed peculiar. He completely altered all the odors within the house. Sometimes he was absent for a long time and everything indoors was quiet. Then Popi would be wearied and wait for Huhuu impatiently. He would become uneasy, run from one room to another, and utter plaintive cries, as he had used to do for the old master. He wanted Huhuu to come back. He was willing to have Huhuu beat him all he wanted to, if only he would not leave him forsaken.

The most curious thing of all was that the new master seemed to take a certain care of Popi. He did this after his rough and capricious style, but Popi appreciated it, nevertheless. One day, in particular, he brought some meat back with him. He had remained absent for a long time, and had with him a market basket when he finally returned. Inside the basket were vegetables, bread and a little raw meat hidden below the other things.

Huhuu shook out the basket on the floor, became frightened when he saw the blood of the raw meat, and ran away. Popi seized the meat, ran under the sideboard with it and was able to chew it for several days. After that day, when Huhuu had brought the meat, Popi thought much more of Huhuu and now understood that he was really the master.

The master climbed up again on the wall. But this time

he came back very soon, and all the dogs in the streets seemed barking outside. The master's clothes were in rags. His skin was torn and bleeding and his paws left a trail of blood wherever they were placed. He crouched in a corner, licked his wounds and murmured low complaints. He was ill for a long time.

Popi then realized how close he was to Huhuu. He went to him every night and morning, as he had done formerly to his old master, to show his sorrow and pity. The smooth, grayish-blue eyelids of the master were closed, but he was breathing so softly that his sleep seemed light and restless. His face wore an expression of the deepest gravity and his heavy jowls were singularly sad. Popi was seized with pity and sympathy. He took care of Huhuu as an old servant takes care of his master when that master has become old and childish. How old and awkward they both were! Their lives were becoming sadder and sadder. The days were shorter and there was but little sunlight. A cold rain fell, from morning to night.

Popi shivered as he lay upon his bed. Huhuu wrapped himself up in blankets. He was now clumsy and stiff in his play, trembled when he sat down, and looked before him without the least interest. One day he found a little keg in the kitchen and rolled it into the other room. He put his ear against the keg and heard gurgling as the keg rolled hither and thither. He smelled of the bung, which emitted a marvelous fragrance. It was at once heavy, mild, toothsome and bewildering. He removed the stopper and poured out some of the liquid from the keg.

From that time, Huhuu began to drink. The only joy and interest he now possessed was to drink and become drunk. When he woke in the morning, his head was heavy with the wine, his hair rough and bristling, his eyes red and weak. He would lift the keg to the level of his mouth, swallowing eagerly until he felt himself becoming good-natured. Then he would mutter and dance about, leaping and staggering until he was weary. Then he would sit down on the floor, lift the keg to his lips again and drink, the wine streaming from his mouth along his cheeks.

When he was drunk, he would go to sleep, holding the

keg close to him in a fond embrace, his hands resting on the keg and his face twisted in a smile. Popi liked him this way. He reminded Popi of that other master, who used to sit down much in the same way in the evening, holding his glass up to the light and smiling as he talked to himself with a satisfied air. Popi no longer feared Huhuu. They slept together and helped keep each other warm.

The drunken Huhuu would grope for Popi's head, and Popi would lick Huhuu's hand. Both became intoxicated, Huhuu by drinking and Popi by smelling the odor of the wine which filled the room. Neither any longer remembered anything. When the keg was empty, Huhuu found another one. He developed a marvelous capacity for finding kegs. He scented out the wine, whose odor was sharpened by his imagination. He became able to open bottles and drink from them.

One day the snow began to fall. It alighted, thick as down. A pale glow was reflected from the ceiling, and the colors within the room changed their hues. Through the broken window the snow and the cold entered the room, and a light wind scattered snowflakes over the overturned furniture. The two old drunkards raised their heads and found everything covered with a white coating.

But there was no more wine. Huhuu had begun to drink as soon as he woke, but the wine lasted only a moment. He staggered into the kitchen to look for more. He groped about for a long time, but his search was vain. He rummaged about, turning the furniture over and over and throwing the room into a terrible confusion. Finally, beneath some of the overturned pitchers and pots into which the old master had formerly poured that queer porridge of his, Huhuu found something which surely might contain wine. It was a tin box, square in shape, and soldered along all its edges. Huhuu thought he could smell wine inside the box, and brought it back with him into the other room.

Huhuu was then wearing a red, quilted jacket. Popi sat down in front of him, his muzzle raised, and his long tail resting on the floor. Huhuu tried to open the box. He scratched it with his nails and tried it with his teeth. Then

he raised the box high in the air and threw it down as hard as he could.

A terrible explosion followed. The flames mounted to the ceiling. Huhuu was thrown against one wall, Popi against another. The house collapsed with a mighty roar.

THE SHADOW OF A SWALLOW

By FURE JANSON

(From *The Man Machine*, a collection of stories)

I AM sixty-five years old, and three days ago I started a new life. It is never too late.

I am sure that you have seen me, an elderly man, wearing a broad-brimmed black hat, and carrying a silver-headed cane on my daily morning walks in the park by the seashore. I walk straight ahead, briskly, with a military bearing which, though not the result of having commanded armies, is appropriate for a captain of industry. Although my graying moustache commands a certain amount of respect, my real strength is in the fact that I am immensely wealthy. My influence, unfortunately, has not been humanitarian, but I have dominated by the cold logic of figures. I have compressed lives and destinies into cold calculations—and not without success. I have bought and sold with profit, and have acquired an unassailable prestige. When I buy or sell on the stock market my activities are considered as barometers. I have organized shipping concerns, dockyards, lumber mills and banks, and when it has seemed to me good business I have destroyed them again, along with the projects of others. I have built up and I have torn down on a large scale, but always I have done so in accordance with my own good judgment. I have convinced myself as well as others of that. There is no denying that my interests have been purely material, confining my activities to iron and wood, and granite and stone, as well as with the material of people. I never had time to know what was the inner significance of my work; I could not stop to question and to ponder, to attempt to penetrate into hidden meanings. I have been a product of my age, and my age has been an evil one.

I am sure that you have seen me, for I have felt your gaze follow me in my solitary promenade, and I have read

in your eyes a reluctant admiration and a furtive fear. If I have never been loved it is because it was quite outside my intention to seek for confidants. The competition was too keen, the chances of betrayal too great. My conception of life had its basis in hard, cold fact. Everything must be measured by mathematical calculation. But I am well-known, my name commands respect. I am not only a personage, I am a celebrity. I have not hesitated to compete with poets, fashioning my poems in the enduring material of reality. I am the author of an admirable epic, which is quite outside the category of long-haired poetry, which I have called, "General Banking, Stocks and Bonds." When I compare my work with that of others I am not too modest, and I look upon all these poetic gentlemen as mere colleagues, perhaps of an inferior gift. More than one of those clever manipulators of words has been shown, thoroughly chagrined, out of my office, and I remember it without compunction. However, that does not mean that I have not been a serious man according to my own conceptions, and always I have detested both books and women when they were light—as they usually were.

But I am digressing. Just now I mentioned the General Bank which I organized and consolidated, as strong as a rock, the abiding stronghold of our economic life. "Our economic life"—how well that expresses my reason for being. I have devoted my life, every clear and concise operation of my disciplined brain, to create marvelous things for the development of our economic life. Naturally I have had some so-called intellectual interests. I have had the wealth to enjoy them more widely than others, whether in music, or art, or literature. Of my literary achievements you already have an idea. But the essential gesture, the beginning and the end, is it the hand on the heart? I think rather the hand on the stomach! There lies the real seat of reality, we are more concerned with that, and there also is the center of our economic life!

But again my phrase has led me astray. It is not thus that I have wished to talk, nor as a social reformer, talking into the air. Society has nothing to do with me; I am outside the social register, I am chaos, I am darkness. My

pride is shattered, my soul is tormented, and I struggle with God. I am an old man—there is the bitter truth.

What then has happened to me? Have I lost my money? It is not money that I have lost, but my faith in myself, and since there can be no reformation without true contrition I thank God for making me humble. It is necessary to drink the bitterest dregs of despair and affliction before the real splendor of existence can be seen. There are too many things that must be undone, too many thoughts that hide the way. I have lived more abundantly during these last few days than throughout all my life before. I cannot make you understand because communication one with another is a difficult thing. Every heart throbs in its own isolated vacuum. And you would not believe, much less understand what has really happened in my life. My life, that long expanse of nothingness, that great list of achievements which has become a shadow, an ephemeral shadow, vanishing.

I was walking in the park the other morning, just as I have done every morning, suspecting nothing. A morning towards the end of summer, the air was cool and limpid, and something of its fresh, calm quality had penetrated into my heart. It was last Sunday, a day impressive enough to be the holy day, but as usual I was more impressed with the importance of my own preoccupations. I was thinking about the forthcoming meeting of a board of directors of which I was chairman. There is nothing more important in life than being Chairman of a Board of Directors. My footsteps led me to the beach and I was looking out to sea. Or rather I thought that I was looking at the sea, but my eyes were unseeing. What I really saw was our last balance sheet, millions of dollars, beautifully arranged in figures in long impressive columns. Far away the church bells were ringing. But there was one item in that carefully arranged balance sheet that did not please me, and I was resolved to raise an objection. We were carrying the obligations of a subsidiary company, a lumber concern, which, at the time, was in difficulties and in need of almost unlimited credit. Some radical step was necessary, and in giving emphasis to my resolve on the subject I struck the

pebbles on the beach with my silver-headed walking-stick. I had concentrated all my energy at the moment, and was gazing at the tightly clenched hand that held the cane. Suddenly I was petrified. Across my hand, with the rapidity of a passing second, there glided a shadow, and quickly I looked up. It was the shadow of a swallow, the fugitive shadow of a swallow's wing. It had a natural explanation, it was an ordinary phenomenon and without importance. But I knew that for me it was not without importance. Even the natural may have significance, and I realized that my day of judgment had come. This fleeting shadow on my hand I knew would return and remain there. It was like a blemish, burning into the skin, and consumed with shame and vaguely troubled I bowed my head in my stigmatized hand. This bird of God in the immensity was too much for me, and I knew that the pointed shadow of the wing would penetrate to my heart and overshadow my life. The gloom became more dense, and began to spread out, falling like ashes before my eyes. I was shivering with cold in the strange and icy breath of an invisible presence.

God appears to us in various guises and under different circumstances: in clouds and tempests, in sickness and in death. The ordeal came to me in that dark moment as I was reflecting how better I should have used my talents. There I was: a complete nonentity, in the presence of the All-Powerful. Nothing had happened, except that the hem of His garment had grazed me in passing. It was enough—more than enough.

Of course you do not understand me. All is so assured in your life and so well organized. Everything has its place and it may even be possible that there is a secret corner discreetly set aside for the fear of God. But perhaps, some unexpected day when everything which is usual loses all its meaning and a sudden tempest sweeps over your soul, perhaps then you will understand.

Nobody could have lived more peacefully than I, I almost said more uprightly than I. And now that I had hidden my face in my shamed hand, I was poor and naked, rotten and ignoble. I had only to pause a moment on the way to see how false had been the life I had led. No man can

face an accusation more terrible. I realized that like those of others, my actions had been the result of acquired principles. I knew that I was just as sincere and just as honest as everybody else, but no more so. And there had been the great mistake. It is criminal to be like everybody else at a time when all are criminals. It disgusted me to realize that I had been a bleating unit in a flock of sheep.

And yonder was a bird in the sky, which, in its flight, had caused a shuddering in the soul of a tainted sinner. The scales fell from my eyes, and for the first time I saw the earth which held me, the waves lapping on the beach, the delicate filigree of the trees against the sky, and I heard the ringing bells of the churches. I heard them, and for the first time the real day began to dawn for me, and I was sixty-five years old.

I felt myself in a dream, in a somewhat happy dream, although I knew that I was under the compulsion of doing everything over again. I had existed quite outside of life, preoccupied with trifles, completely oblivious of the privilege of man simply to be good. And now I was hearing church bells, and since I had interpreted the flitting shadow across my eyes as a sign from heaven, a solitary warning of approaching death, I hastened to heed the call of the chimes. I was walking in a daze, and yet I knew exactly where I wished to go, to an old city square, bordered with silent, red-roofed houses, on one corner a little, long-forgotten church, a toy church with a tapering tower pointing towards the sky. Its doors were open and I heard the crystalline voices of the choir, pouring out worship to God, bathing me in the blessed hope of finding an obscure corner appropriate even for my sin-stained self, even though I was a member of another denomination, and therefore technically lacking an authentic passport. Bravely I mounted the steps, went to the holy water font, and with awkward hand slowly traced the sign of the cross on my breast. I could feel the cross searing into my heart. My body was bending under an immense and invisible weight and I knelt on the hard pavement. Through the windows, the light filtered, and my oppressed and bewildered eyes turned downward. At a peal from the organ

I moved my lips in a mechanical confession to God. You should have seen me in this humiliating position—my social standing would have suffered a severe setback.

Frankly and simply I talked to the God of this parish church, whoever he might be. "I confess everything," I said. "I am guilty of having had success in life, a success so superficial that it counts for nothing with you, O my God. Can you pardon me, the chief among barterers? I have used inanimate things for my own gain to such an extent that I have become myself merely a thing. I have been as hard and unyielding as the iron and stone in which I traded. And I have been deaf to the sweet melody which permeates your universe. Now I begin to hear it, the eloquent silence which speaks to me through turmoil and struggle, and the wrangling voice of men. I have groveled in the midst of merchandise, so that I have not understood what it is to live. And so I am here eating the ashes of repentance. Although I am a millionaire, I need your aid: I own lands and houses, and have no home; I am a famous builder, and yet I have no shelter. Forests and valleys are mine, but I have never had time to stop to look at the grass by the side of the road, or to listen to the murmur of the trees. This is the list of my accomplishments, O Lord, and it has become the list of my sins. It is not that you disapprove work and effort, but you disapprove the clamor for the sake of clamor, when it seeks only to drown out the silence. I have wielded the hammer, I have made iron and steel to ring, and that is well; but I have also pounded my heart on the anvil, making it as hard as iron. I was so busy that I forgot the meaning of time, and my work became worthless, entirely out of accord with your intention. And so I forgot to be good, and that was wrong. The expanding soul of my youth was soon stifled, and I was already old before my time. Some catastrophe was necessary to bring me to myself, some extraordinary occurrence, and you have brought it to pass. A bird fluttered by, gliding its shadow over my hands and eyes, and the symbol awakened me. I knew it to be a message from heaven, a dark warning from the dazzling sky, and I understood your sign. I have not lost my

intelligence nor my capacity for clear thinking. These qualities are not foreign to me, and I know full well that I have been granted a moment in which to think. Nothing more was necessary and I have faced the truth. I have estimated my life from the new point of view, and I shudder. I am bankrupt. I have associated myself with the enemies of God on earth, living just as everybody else has lived. That is the frightful indictment. I have no excuse, no extenuating circumstance. I have been a publican and a sinner. O Lord, pardon my transgressions."

My knees ached against the flagstones and my limbs were bruised. It was not exactly a comfortable position for the Chairman of a Board of Directors. But I remained on my knees and continued to mumble my urgent appeals. Can you see this old imposter kneeling, this honored citizen, praying to God? I can hear your laughter, good people, but your ridicule does not deter me. I continue to mumble my prayer. I know that I am without eloquence, that my voice is hoarse, but God has His own ways of hearing, and it may be that he has heard too many of those whose voices are softly flattering, and whose words come too easily. Perhaps he will also lend his ear to the underbidder, to one of life's deformers. I am aware that my petition is tainted with the spirit of the age, that I have left myself a bare half-hour in which to repent of the misdeeds of a lifetime. With more foresight I might sooner have begun to practice a philosophical humility; I might even have been in some way helpful to my associates. I might have written a book, edifying high financiers, adapted to their curtailed capacities of comprehension, to their stunted ideas of justice. Perhaps it would have been a new edition of an old book, revised and corrected, with its modern dedication indicated in the title: *The Little Thomas à Kempis for Great Men*. I am speaking in all seriousness, I assure you, having had some experience in this field. I am not ignorant of the frightful and unconscious misery of the leisure class.

When finally I raised myself from my crouched position I was dizzy, and I went tottering to sit down on a bench near the wall. I was there as a beggar, with a horrible

emptiness in my soul, and a gnawing fear that the atonement for wasted life might not be the work of a moment. It might be that I should have to strive to refashion myself throughout an immense space of life. Again I hear your laughter, my friends, for you do not believe in life after death; but you do believe in life before death, and the responsibility, altogether appalling, is none the less. I was experiencing a frightful futility in my heart. Yonder at the altar the corpulent priest was officiating, the central actor in a blurred scene of lighted candles and choir boys. Its effect upon me was sweet and soothing. Mystic? No, God has nothing to do with mysticism, he is as frank and clear as the day. I can see that, now that I have had time to put my ideas in order. God is mystic as the rays of the sun are mystic, or the light, or the swallow's wing.

I was reluctant to disturb the devotions of others, but the church began to seem to me too low of ceiling, the roof weighed me down, the incense sickened me. I got up and started, on insecure feet, towards the door. An usher stopped me, making a sign that it was forbidden to open the door. I pushed the silent man aside, panting in a strangled voice: "Let me pass, I must get out to breathe God's free air!"

I felt defeated, exhausted. The houses were whirling around before my eyes, and the streets danced in front of me as I sought my objective, my home. Home! For me a terrible word, signifying the transitory and empty stopping place of a body adrift. There was my safe, a strong box, brutal and unseeing, but the symbol of my whole life. I knew well what I had to do, and I advanced unsteadily. I opened the secret lock, fumbling; with quick movements I filled my pockets with the bank notes I found there, large, fat bills for the most part, such as are necessary for a financier. They were honorable enough acquisitions, certainly. Hastily I descended the steps to the basement, some feet below the ground, where I had a debt to discharge. I knew this tenement house well; it belonged to me and contained all sorts of dwelling places. Below I had installed a fellow man with a wife and children as a servant, a janitor. Now, for the first time, I wanted to see

this hovel, and I knocked and entered. It was, as can be imagined, poor and narrow and overcrowded. Children swarmed in every corner, the latest born at his mother's breast. She was seated on the edge of the bed and when I entered she hid her face with a frightened gesture. At the one window was a white-haired old woman, wearing spectacles, and holding a Bible in her trembling hands. The janitor, well built but stooped from too much hard work, was drying some clothing by a corner of the fire, a white-lipped boy clambering over his knees. I had known him a long time, this janitor; he came from one of my properties, but I had paid no attention to his existence. The lodging was meager and small, but it had an air of Sunday and of peace.

I was on the threshold, tormented with shame. The playing of the children suddenly ceased, and a death-like silence pervaded the room. My unexpected visit was disquieting; they feared the worst, discharge, unemployment, homelessness. However, they invited me to sit down, and I seated myself on a small bench near the door, the bench of the accused.

"Westeson," I began, and I did not recognize my low voice, so different it had become, so lacking in its previous imperious hardness; "you see, Westeson, you must leave this room, we need it for a workroom for the carpenter who is in charge of the repairs to the building."

I could not have put it more awkwardly, and I saw their faces, mute and pained, turn towards me. I drew a deep breath. How difficult it is to be good!

"But there are two vacant rooms in the building, you know, on the stairway on the other side, and I thought that with your large family, that would be more convenient for you, two rooms and a kitchen. What beautiful children you have, Westeson! And your wages cannot continue as before; I have decided to increase them a little, as I would not like to lose you, you are a hard worker and thoroughly reliable. I think that we can triple the figure, paying you some back wages at the new rate. You have been in the service of the house for a long time and have a legitimate right to the increase in your arrears.

There, that is why I have come to disturb your peaceful Sunday."

I counted out some of the large bank notes on the table. There they were, large, amazing, in the center of the poor table. Westeson rose and looked me square in the eyes; he did not understand what I had done, and he said nothing. But his wife had understood. She sensed that something had happened in my heart, and that I was to be taken seriously. She came up to me, the baby still at her breast, and, taking my hand in her free one, she pressed it warmly, looking at me, bathed in tears. I shall never forget those tears on her lean cheeks. May God bless this silent workwoman, who came to my aid in my sad solitude; her sweet gesture was a consolation to my tormented soul, and I thanked her. I thanked them all and withdrew.

Next I went up to the attic where there was a poor widow with her boy. There were plenty of poor people living in my rich house, if one took the trouble to look for them. They have a peculiar facility for burrowing in basements, or hiding away among the rafters. Already an experienced intruder, I entered her lodging. I shall tell what occurred there only in outline. I told her that her son had been assured an education, that he could look forward to a youth unmarred by worry over money, and that he was to have an equal chance in life with other boys. Eagerly I took out my money again, speaking as an old friend of the house. I made arrangements for enough capital to start on, and was overwhelmed with thanks, the little boy's eyes sparkling meanwhile as in a fairy tale.

I came away rapidly like the shadow I was. There was still another visit I had to make in the rôle of a philanthropic *deus ex machina*. I had often noticed two extremely old ladies, dressed in threadbare black, always walking together in the courtyard with a ceremonious little step that told of better days. Their obvious gentility made matters more difficult for me, and I went to see them prepared with every formality, even with a receipt for the money. Having again given them a sum from my pocket-book, I explained the strange procedure as the result of a life annuity of a particularly confidential nature, that

had been arranged for them. I would not have been believed if I had told the truth, that heaven had sent down a swallow carrying in his beak a package of large bills.

Thus I consecrated my afternoon to beneficence, and I felt that I had done well. It became a substitute for an undeveloped soul, it was my accounting.

But since the church universal had abandoned me to my fate, all that remained for me, in my solitude, was to place myself subject to my strongly beating heart. Involuntarily I still acted in some measure in conformity with the outline of the Council of Trent in having recourse to mechanical penitence as a complement to the true contrition of the soul. My verbal confession, although made as a habit under the vault of a church, had not been spoken into the ears of a confessor. Confessors are valuable only that man may be able to lacerate his fettering flesh.

All that happened three days ago; three days consecrated to a sorrowful examination of conscience. The world has become strangely foreign to me, and what I have tried to do in the silence has had for its aim the atonement for at least a little of the evil I had done in the time of my power. I had acted in concert with superficial beings who had falsified existence and made it ugly. And so my entire thought now has become a protest against myself.

It is an infirm hand which traces these incoherent words. I am in the midst of the crisis. It is exhausting for the body to cleanse the soul. I await my physician.

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I have spoken to you as if I were still alive. At the moment you read this I am dead. I died the other day, and you have read my death-notice. It was certainly an imposing obituary, full of respect. There were many dates of industrial importance. There was fulsome praise of character, of benevolence, of public benefactions. Truly an encomium. I foresaw this obituary, and it irritated me. And so I have written this real estimate of myself and have arranged to have it published after my burial. I

wanted to give you an idea of the being who seemed to be really me. I have done it for myself, to show that obituaries are deceiving. That obituary, with all my heart, I emphatically repudiate.

THE HOUSE WITHOUT A FACE

By LIESBET DILL

NOWHERE in the whole city was there a sadder street than the rue Blondlot. Turning away from the wide esplanade, it ran behind the military barracks and was lined with houses which were of drearily monotonous sameness. They were all of two stories, all had the same roofs of grayish-blue slate, and the same kind of barred windows, and the same old-fashioned doorbells in the narrow doors, and in the cracks in the rough plastering tufts of grass were growing out on every one of these grim houses. The façades, all of the same shade of gray, seemed oddly respectable. No house on the street could be distinguished from another. Apparently some architect had carelessly stuck them all where they were on some very long and hot Sunday afternoon, and had then daubed them all with an enormous brush dipped in gray whitewash.

It was easy to see that the street had once been a main thoroughfare. When the French Hussars had been quartered in the barracks, their families had occupied these houses, but after the war the Bavarian light horse had come in, the entrance to the barracks had been constructed on the other side, and now the rue Blondlot had become merely a byway and neglected alley, good for small shopkeepers or modest householders.

The street was so still that often, for hours at a time, the only motion perceptible in it was that of the dry leaves, or bits of paper, impelled onward by the wind. No children played before the doors, no flowers appeared at the windows, and thick curtains prevented any glance from penetrating into the interior of the houses. In summer-time, when the hot sun beat down upon the pale, blank fronts of the dwellings, the street became ghostly. The gray blinds were then all tightly closed, nothing stirred anywhere, and the only sound audible was the stumbling

music made by a child engaged in practicing his exercises upon some muffled piano.

The Grignoir house had a wider front and bigger entrance than the other houses on the street, but otherwise it was as tightly closed, and as obstinately reserved behind its barred windows, as all the other houses. At eight o'clock in the morning the old housekeeper, in her white cap of soft tulle and her embroidered mantle, would burst forth from the front door and busy herself with polishing up the brass bell-pull. And every afternoon, at precisely three o'clock, the gate would open to allow a carriage to pass out. It was drawn by a span of black horses, and a stiff coachman sat above. Through the panes of the panels at the side a glimpse could be caught of the stony profiles of an old married pair, sitting rigidly side by side. They were Monsieur and Madame Grignoir, taking their daily drive. In an hour or so, the carriage would again appear in the street, the gate would open as if drawn back by an invisible hand, the carriage would drive in, the gate would close behind it, and nothing more would be seen that day of the two old people who lived in the Grignoir house.

At evening, the faint, pale light of a candle flame could sometimes be glimpsed through the closed window blinds, and the arm of a servant might be visible for an instant as she drew the curtains close. But no sound ever emerged from within and the house remained as if hermetically sealed against the outer world, seeming to be plunged in some deep sleep which had been caused by the house itself. No guest was ever seen crossing its threshold, nobody ever came to leave packages, and the postman threw the mail into a mailbox placed at the front door.

Between the families who were original natives of the town, and who had returned home after the war of 1870 to resume their affairs, and the civil and military people who were newly stationed in the place, there was no connection or intercourse whatever. Even after a number of years the separation still persisted, unchanged.

The French people lived retired within their small, dark dwellings and did not emerge from their gardens, enclosed

by high walls, even in the bright days of summer. The town was divided into two parts by a slender little river. On the farther side, the Germans possessed gay villas buried in gardens, and between them and the dwellers on the nearer bank of the stream there was a gulf as impassable as a real sea. The names of the old families were hardly known and they and their members had no share in the comradely life of the German residents.

Of the Grignoir family, nothing was known except that it was one of the oldest of the region, and that it possessed the porcelain works outside the town and owned the stately gray home in the rue Blondlot. The newer population paid no attention to the old couple.

It chanced that I lived opposite their home. I beheld its imposing, sad and lifeless façade every day. Its air of monotonous mystery was so intriguing that one's curiosity was stimulated, and the question inevitably occurred, as to whether the lifeless mask presented to the world without really fairly represented the existence going on within. Perhaps those carefully barred and heavily curtained windows concealed a real secret. There was quite likely some specter behind the outside shell, and some skeleton probably existed within the gray walls.

One afternoon, I watched the carriage come out of the gate and roll away, and noted the old couple sitting stiff and straight in the back seat. Where did they go, thus every day at the same time? I decided to follow them, and set forth in pursuit of the carriage. The carriage proceeded up the rue Blondlot, traversed the esplanade, rolled over the bridge and, instead of heading for the German villas, turned to the right and continued along the very dusty highway between the rows of slender poplar trees until it gained the churchyard.

As I came up to the churchyard gate, the carriage was standing at the left, the coachman was nodding on his high seat, his reins held idly in his hand, while the two horses, evidently accustomed to the delay, were sleepily shaking their heads to avoid the flies. The churchyard gate stood open, and the churchyard was usually deserted at this hour. The graves lay starkly in the sunlight, with

no soul to have a care for them. The place was very tranquil and silent, the graves were abloom with roses, and the birds sang gaily in the trees.

Most of the gravestones bore inscriptions in French, and were adorned with garlands made of glass beads and supported on iron staves. On some of the graves, photographs of the deceased people were enclosed by stiff bouquets of artificial flowers. Against the wall large old gravestones were leaning, whose inscriptions were nearly effaced and which had made place for stones of more recent date.

Suddenly I saw the old couple. The old lady, wearing a black veil, was supporting herself upon her husband's arm. The two were quite absorbed in contemplating a grave lying directly before them. The lady was seemingly praying. They placed a wreath of white roses upon the grave, stood together still looking at it for some moments in silence, then turned away and slowly retraced their steps toward where I was standing. I could thus observe them more closely than ever before. They seemed stern, haughty and reserved, the very counterpart of their house.

They appeared to be somewhat over sixty years old. The man had a gray, upturned moustache and wore the red ribbon of the Legion of Honor in his buttonhole. The lady, heavily clad in crape, presented a fine and austere profile, which was hard and stony, as if produced by a repressed and contracted life of introspection. The heads of the pair resembled those one may see in old pictures, frilled with ruffles, and whose models have long been at rest in their graves.

When the carriage had been driven away, I approached the grave, which lay near one of the walls of the churchyard. It bore a broken willow-tree, wrapped about by clinging roses in full bloom. The gilded inscription on the gravestone was already being worn away by the rains. It read, "Here rests our beloved Colette." This inscription was followed by the dates of the deceased person's birth and death, and the final words, "Pray God for the peace of her soul." The grave marked the resting-place of a young girl of nineteen.

I stood at the grave for a long time, as if spellbound.

My thoughts wandered hither and yon, seeking the meaning of the very simple yet very enigmatic inscription, which I could not explain. I had thought that the couple had been quite without children. Who was this Colette? And why had she died so young? The twilight began softly to fall above the grave, an invisible bird sang low and softly somewhere, as if crooning a lullaby, and I plucked a rose and went away. Some two years later I learned the story of Colette.

The old housekeeper had a quarrel one day with her mistress, Madame Grignoir, and left her employ. She purchased a modest and rather poor little business maintained in a modest and poor little shop, which lay in perpetual gloom. There the gaslight burned sadly when evening came. Within the shop could be dimly perceived the white cap of an old woman which moved to and fro. No purchasers were ever seen to enter the shop.

One wondered how such a little enterprise could maintain life, but it was, in fact, sufficient to satisfy the needs of the old woman and her cat. The old woman remained enthroned behind a pyramid of wax candles and prayer-books, until one day she fell sick, and had the notary sent for.

The priest had already paid her a visit and administered extreme unction. Her will was signed, sealed, and placed in her little closet, but she had something else to complete before departing from her little world forever. As the old notary walked up and down in the more retired part of the room, the old woman received him from under her dusty canopy of cretonne. She was supported by her cushions and her thin hands moved restlessly upon the counterpane, as if she had been awaiting the notary with impatience.

She was troubled by an old memory. Her conscience, which had remained quite at ease during her long period of service with the Grignoir family and which had been almost petrified by the long, lifeless time spent in the proud, cold old house, was now stirring, and she could not quit the world without absolving herself of the past. "Sit down, sir, for I have a long story to tell you," said she.

Captain Grignoir had been a French officer, serving in the war of 1870. He was killed at the siege of Paris, leaving his young widow and little daughter, Colette, in very straitened circumstances. Of the name Grignoir he had inherited only the luster, for the possessions and the porcelain factory belonged to another branch of the family. During his life, he had enjoyed, at the hands of his rich cousin, only the privilege of living in the old Grignoir home in the rue Blondlot. He was allowed the favor of dwelling in the fine, large house for an absurdly low rent. This privilege continued to be granted to his widow.

In the upper story of the house, the owner of the factory reserved a suite of rooms, which served him for his brief and transitory visits to the place. For the owner, André Grignoir, lived in Paris, and the factory ran along as it had always done, without much need of his presence.

Madame Grignoir had seen the French Hussars depart and had taken leave of the French regimental families. She had next been obliged to witness the entrance of the Germans into the town. Those were unfortunate days. Of all the hard and bitter times which the old housekeeper had known during her life in the Grignoir house, from the birth of the little Colette to the death of her father, these days of the entering Germans were the worst. The young widow had stopped her ears when, from within her bedroom, she heard the clear, piercing tones of the trumpets ushering in the German troops.

Madame hated these Germans with all the hatred natural to a French woman who had had her experience. She could not behold one of the hostile uniforms upon the street without feeling her blood rushing to her head. She never vouchsafed so much as a glance at the elegant cavaliers who used to ride by her house. Her husband had been killed by a bullet fired by a German Hussar. She never forgave and forgot that.

She lived quite retired from the world. On Thursdays, she received a few friends who played whist with her. Every morning, she attended mass. She sent her little daughter away to the Sacred Heart Convent at Brussels,

to keep her away from contact with the German children. Only when the cousin made her a visit did her widowed life assume a somewhat more active and worldly air. At such times, she laid aside her black garments, and became, in fact, transformed, and seemed lovely and young again. She could then be noticed, beside her stately cousin, in the family box at the theatre, and would go to drive in the family carriage. At her cousin's hunting galas, held at his country house, she did not hesitate to appear. André Grignoir knew how to have galas. "And he knows something about pretty women, too," ran the gossip.

Since he wanted to enjoy his life, he had never married. And as soon as he left her, Madame resumed the usual tenor of her existence. Colette came home only during her vacations. She was a reserved, quiet, unassuming little girl, with rich, blonde hair and soft-veiled, deep-blue eyes. She looked just like a German girl. As a matter of fact, the Grignoirs were not of pure French blood. The grandmother had been a German, and Colette was like her grandmother.

The mother paid little attention to the child. She neglected nothing in rearing her, she placed her in the best convent at Brussels, and engaged the very best masters for her in music and painting. Colette lacked nothing whatever, but the child seemed to find love absent from her existence. She missed this lack of affection. She never seemed wholly free and gay. When she came to spend her vacations in the great, silent house, she remained quite silent herself in the big rooms, under the eye of her stern, cold mother. It seemed as if she felt relief and happiness to return to her convent, where she had girl friends and beloved teachers.

She liked best to sit in a corner of the kitchen and read German legends and fairy tales. On one occasion her mother, finding her thus occupied, snatched her book and became very angry. She scolded the housekeeper for permitting the child to read German. "I do not wish her to speak this language," stormed the mother, her great black eyes flashing with so much wrath that the poor child burst into tears. "What have I done, mamma,"

sobbed the child. "I just like the fairy stories!" But the book went into the fireplace, and Colette sobbed all night long in her little bedroom.

But the Grignoirs were far from being purely French. They had mingled more or less with the Germans, as might be expected in the frontier region where they lived. Perhaps it was for this very reason that, after the war, they became rigidly French in sympathy and remained so strictly aloof from all association with the Germans. They never allowed a postman or German errand-boy or messenger to cross their threshold. The mother's greatest fear was, that Colette, who grew more and more like her grandmother, might come to adopt some of the sentiments which the old grandmother had entertained.

Colette loved fairy-tales and would dream over them. She could not be persuaded that the French had done well in the war of 1870. "They lost it, I know," said the child. She had read German histories, and of course real history could not misrepresent. She was evidently not a real French child. She was not a fanatical lover of her country. She had no masculine traits, nor had she any hot and violent blood within her veins. Neither her mother nor the sisters at Sacred Heart could conquer the child's spirit. "I must be true to myself," insisted Colette. Her mother wondered what the situation would be when Colette should come home for good.

When she finally left the convent and came home for good and all, Colette was eighteen years old. She was larger than her mother, very blooming, and almost too mature and decided for such a young girl. Her proud and elegant bearing was remarked in the town. The old billiard players in the Grand Gallery Café would run to the window and stare out whenever the lovely Colette went by. The officers loudly clanged their sabers in the rue Blondlot. One of them, a tall, slender, brown cavalry officer, used to race up and down in the street early every morning, while his dark eyes roved over the windows of the Grignoir house as if they could blaze with fire.

This officer appeared bold and fearless, and he was as beautiful as a young Greek god. He succeeded in accom-

plishing something which nobody else could accomplish. He caused the lovely Mademoiselle Grignoir's blonde head to peep forth from between her window curtains. He bowed to her, without the least introduction, and he could read appreciation in her beautiful eyes.

Colette then became ashamed to think that he moved her so and that she acknowledged his presence as she did. With those two, it was love at first sight. She had hit the young man as a lightning flash might have done. And yet nothing could be more purposeless, more hopeless, than this passion. Colette herself felt that there was something unfounded in it all, but she saw the handsome, brown horseman riding forth every day boldly and daringly. The fire of his eyes kindled her heart, in which the flame smouldered and burned, on and on.

In spite of her recognition of the danger, in spite of her feeling that she was courting destruction, she began to think only of stealing away from the gloomy house and the captivity enforced by her mother, so that she might really know this young man, with whom she had so far only exchanged glances. Her mother seemed unaware of all this, or perhaps she did not wish to perceive it. She could not bear the thought that her daughter could like a German.

But Colette had German blood in her, and there were plenty of opportunities for the two young people to meet. When Colette, beside her mother in the family carriage, could see, in the afternoons, the white dresses of the young German girls on the tennis courts, where they were playing tennis with the German officers, and beheld the tennis balls flying about, and heard the gay, young voices, her heart contracted with pent-up eagerness to burst forth. When she was sitting beside the hearth in the warm room within-doors, some religious book in her hand, she heard the carriages going to the casino, saw the brightly lit windows, and heard gay dance-music behind the closed blinds. She looked with longing at the young women who rode out to the groves, with their cavaliers, in the bright morning sunshine. She often saw her young officer among these people, and kept thinking of him. She kept hoping for

some chance meeting to occur, which never did occur.

On warm, summer evenings, the breezes brought her the sound of waltzes, resounding from across the river and from the illuminated gardens. She heard the regimental band playing, and gazed longingly at the Chinese lanterns swaying back and forth among the trees. The bright, fragrant gardens stretched away in the distance like islands of love, and Colette looked far and far away, with burning eyes.

"Next winter we shall go to Paris." So her mother tried to console her. Colette was to be presented to society when she was twenty. She really suffered greatly in the artificial loneliness in which her mother kept her. And while her mother was building glowing fairy castles in distant Paris, Colette was thinking of the eyes of her young knight, whom she saw riding up and down every morning, as soon as she opened her window. And she dreamed of the young man every night.

On a boisterous spring evening Colette came home with glowing cheeks and feverish eyes. She had met "him" at last. He had been waiting for her at the churchyard wall. Protected by the wall, they had strolled up and down for a long time between the graves lying in solitude about them. Here they were safe from all intrusion. They had found each other, as if by magnetic attraction.

When she reached home her mother was engaged in packing the trunks. A Paris despatch from her cousin had just arrived, saying that a distant aunt had just died, that her will must be opened in the presence of the relatives, and that Colette's mother had received a bequest. Good fortune had come upon Madame Grignoir, who was so much excited that she did not notice Colette's disordered hair or unusual appearance. The next day she left for Paris.

As soon as she was gone, Colette threw her arms around the old housekeeper's neck, and told her that she was in love and was loved—by a German—by the officer who rode by the house every morning. She told about meeting the officer in the rain, and that she intended to meet him again.

The old housekeeper was frightened. "What about your mother, Colette?"

Colette's white face assumed such a determined expression that it was evidently useless to remonstrate. Colette would have to go her own way. She wanted to talk to her lover, but did not know where or how. "If he should come here, into the living room, every step would be watched," she said. "But if he could come up there, in the rooms upstairs, nobody could disturb them there." The old housekeeper need only give her the keys. Colette begged and coaxed, wept and raged, and the old woman finally yielded.

Colette's mother delayed returning. She had to remain away longer than she had expected to. Every evening, Colette went up to the quiet rooms of the white-hung curtains and the motionless clocks, lighted the candles, and waited. And the old housekeeper also waited, below by the fireside, until the soft sound of the bell was heard. It rang as briefly and low as if the young man were restraining it with his hand, and fairly holding his breath. The old woman never saw the young man. She only heard his quick, elastic step, leaping up the stairs as if he had no time to lose. She knew Colette was waiting up there. The old woman heard nothing. Not a sound was made. The house seemed asleep, and even the clocks seemed breathless. The thick carpets overhead muffled every footstep, and the old woman sat listening by the hearth, trembling with dread lest the bell should ring and Colette's mother suddenly appear with her traveling bag. Then a door could be heard to close, and Colette utter a stifled adieu. Quick, light steps then descended the stairs, the lock snapped at the outer door, the door closed, and Colette lay in her arms, weeping, laughing. "Ah, I love him, I love him!"

"And your mother, Colette!"

Here Colette's eyes grew dark and her face grew pale, but she shook off the question as a bird shakes off rain-drops. But the last evening finally arrived.

Colette's mother had wired that she would arrive by the night train, and that cousin André would accompany her. The old woman put things to rights upstairs, Colette helping her. With trembling hands, they removed the white, ghostly covering from the furniture in the uncle's costly,

beautifully furnished rooms. They put fresh candles in the candlesticks, and Colette filled the jardinières with fresh flowers. She was pale and uneasy at the thought of her mother's coming arrival.

At nine o'clock the soft bell rang, and the door was opened from within. The old woman heard the well-known quick, light steps on the stairs and went back to her fireside, to read her Bible by the light of a dim lamp. But this time she had to stop every little while, and listen for sounds outside, and for sounds upstairs, where everything seemed terribly still. Once, she thought she heard Colette sobbing. She felt an impulse to go up and warn them. She kept thinking she heard the bell ring, and that her mistress was at the door, bearing her valise. But still nobody came.

Just before midnight, the young man finally left the house. The old servant breathed more easily. But no Colette came tripping down the stairs as usual, to tell her about the meeting. When she at last went upstairs herself, she found the girl sitting before the cold hearth in the empty salon, staring straight before her, pale as death. What had happened?

The mother arrived very late. With her was her cousin, who at once took possession of the rooms upstairs. The legacy was much greater than any one had expected, but Colette seemed to show no interest in the news. At the table she seemed so pale and distracted that the cousin teasingly said, "You have some unlucky love affair, hey?"

Colette started, and her mother threw a searching glance at her. The cousin was changed. He had gone the pace and lived fast. He had touched, bewildered and deceived many a heart. Now his hair was thinning and he was getting bald. He had arrived at the time of life when he wanted no more conquests, but desired only to rest, enjoy peace, and have the pleasure of dwelling tranquilly in his own home.

"How lovely your daughter is," he remarked, lifting Colette's chin to look into her eyes. "Such beautiful hair! You ought to put on your prettiest clothes." Colette drew her eyebrows darkly together. At his caressing touch a shudder ran over her.

The cousin, however, seemed to notice nothing. He thought that for such a little, insignificant girl to withdraw from him, man of fashion and man of the world, was of so little moment that he paid no attention to her very evident gesture of repulsion. After he had been there a few days he had no desire to hurry away to Paris. They spent the summer visiting the country house, driving out and hunting. The cousin taught Colette how to shoot and, as autumn came on, he spoke of staying on for the winter. The calmness of the rue Blondlot quieted his nerves, he felt happy and tranquil in the big house, he sent for his servants, and had his meals downstairs with his cousin.

And while these two seemed to be pursuing a common object, Colette fluttered about her room like a bird in a cage. Never had her mother seemed so stern. The change in Colette had not escaped her, but she could find no satisfactory answer to the urgent questions which she addressed to her daughter.

"I am not ill, Mamma."

"Well, you are surely changed, my child. What has happened to you?"

She noted how Colette grew paler and paler, and remarked the increasing nervousness that settled upon Colette's drawn features. Colette ceased to sleep. For hours she could be heard walking up and down in her room. She wrote letters which she tore to pieces and she often looked as if she had been weeping.

The German regiment was absent for the military exercises, and the town seemed dead. Autumn came full upon them. Then the soldiers came back to the rue Blondlot.

One evening, as Colette came home from the town, she found her mother and uncle conversing quietly together by the fresh, autumnal fire. They were both much moved. The uncle kissed his niece's hand significantly, as he had kissed her mother's hand. For, after the French custom, he had just asked Colette's mother to permit him to make Colette his wife.

Colette refused to be Grignoir's wife with so much terror that they all thought she was ill. She violently set herself against all her mother's plans and wept bitterly as she

threw herself on the floor at her mother's feet. Her mother could not understand the wild words which she sobbed forth. "I don't want to, I cannot!"

"Why do you not wish this, my dear?" asked her mother. "Your cousin is a good man, in the best time of his life, and he is very rich. He offers you a life of ease and happiness. You can have a wonderful part in life. You can be introduced to the first circles of Paris. And with all this, your cousin is in love with you!"

But Colette's tears only flowed more freely. She dared not tell the truth. She knew that her words would be a death blow to her mother. What! A German officer her daughter's husband? Never! She could already hear what her mother would say. Her mother would think that Colette would become reasonable. It was impossible for any young girl to reject Grignoir, for whom all the young girls and widows had been angling for years, in Paris and everywhere else, and who had elegantly slipped through the fingers of every one of them! He had sworn to live single, yet at sight of Colette the miracle had been effected! He loved her, loved her as a young man would love her, almost with dread, anxiously begging for her favor, and breathlessly awaiting her "Yes."

A frightful period ensued, for Colette and for every one in the household. Madame Grignoir tried to console her cousin with the explanation, "She is yet too young. She doesn't want to tie herself down." But the cousin observed Colette's pallor and tearful eyes, becoming suddenly more noticeable whenever he came near her, with the roses in his hand which he brought her every day. People thought they were betrothed.

"Why do you fight against your good fortune?" demanded Madame Grignoir angrily, as Colette, pale and silent, would leave the table so that she might go to her room as quickly as possible. "How obstinate and blind you are! Do you think I was wildly in love with your father? My dear child, we lived together happily, I was always a true wife to him, and I lived only for him and his child, but as for love—I could have preferred some one else for a love match!"

"Mother!" cried Colette, throwing herself down and burying her face in her mother's lap. "Mother, I love some one else, myself!"

"My poor child! Love is a luxury which only the wealthy can enjoy. We are poor. Don't forget that. We depend upon our cousin's good graces. If he should withdraw this house from us, if we should receive no more allowance from the porcelain works, we should be as poor as beggars. Be reasonable, Colette. Be good. Who is it you are in love with?" And she added the last words with a smile.

But Colette did not reply. She was listening for a sound outside. A sabre clicked on the street, which ascended slightly in front of the house. A dark wave of color flooded Colette's worn little face, she pulled herself together, mustered up her courage, and found strength to avow it all. The old housekeeper, who had the habit of listening at the door, heard Colette's confession, which her mother listened to without a breath or a word. Then her mother suddenly rose and moved a chair within the room.

"What! A German? A German officer? Never!"

But she had seen the officer riding in front of the window, and Colette should be carefully watched after this—carefully observed, until she should really become reasonable. Grignoir should think that she was sick. Colette could stay in her room and think of the misfortunes into which she would plunge them all with her miserable passion for a stranger, who wore the enemy's uniform! Her own daughter, the daughter of an officer of the French army!

Whenever Colette's mother talked of the proud, tragic past of France, she became moved and pathetic, Colette's weeping sounding amid her loud tones like the whining of a wounded animal. The old housekeeper's heart was sore with pain at sight of the mother's stony opposition to her daughter's terrible despair. Yes, said her mother, Colette should wait. If she did not soon become reasonable, she should be sent back to the convent. A daughter taking the veil would be a thousand times better than a daughter becoming the wife of an enemy officer. She would rather see her daughter dead than that!

It was wonderful to see how, a quarter of an hour later,

Colette's mother, down in the dining room, where Grignoir was uneasily wondering why Colette was not present, would lightly comment on a bad cold from which Colette was supposedly suffering, as she held the cards in her lovely hands and gayly talked of earlier days, when they were all young, and when her "poor August," who never learned to play cards, only wanted to go to sleep at the fireside.

"Yes," said Grignoir, "he never had much temperament, either at cards or—it's your deal, Antoinette. Your daughter gets her temperament from you."

Colette was shut in, upstairs. She sat at the window of her lonely room, looking out into the rain which was falling over the town as a token of autumn, to usher in the winter and destroy all the flowers and leaves along the promenade. The trees were dripping, and droplets ran down the window-panes, just as her tears might do. She had wept herself into a state of fatigue. Her longing was too fresh, too wild, too vast, to be annihilated. She became stormier, more violent, more longing, since she had been imprisoned, and since her mother, with cold contempt, had begun to treat her as if she were a criminal.

The only thing to relieve her would be to write to her lover. But there was nobody to whom she could entrust her despairing letters. She had once found the old house-keeper weeping over her letters by the light of a candle. For everybody had deserted Colette.

"Can you remain true to me?" the young German officer had asked, with doubt in every look. And Colette, feeling the blood mounting to her very temples, had replied, "Yes, I can and will be true!" But still she had felt that he was troubled and doubtful. She feared his, "You are not true!" And she had begged the old servant, "Go out, and take this letter to him." And the old woman was just slipping down the outer steps, in her felt shoes, when the fine ear of her mistress heard her walking. Nobody left the house after dark, so what did the servant want in town?

The poor old servant had turned about, stammered an excuse, and found Grignoir suddenly standing in the doorway. "Come back," he had bade the old woman, and the door had closed behind the three of them. Nobody,

not even the village priest, had learned what those doors shut from the world. Nobody. But Colette, in despair, wrote letter after letter.

The old woman took Colette's jewelry, even her last little golden cross, and pocketed also the money with which the others purchased her silence. Money is very useful and powerful. The old woman had long been dependent upon the Grignoir family, and wanted to be independent. The old servant loved gold and money as Colette loved her cavalier, as Monsieur Grignoir loved Colette, and as Madame Grignoir loved comfortable, well-disposed existence. The old servant wondered if, after all, anything so cursed by her mistress could be a good thing. Wasn't Colette's mother really doing a righteous act, thus to break the bonds between the lovers with ruthless hand? Love flares up so quickly! Colette would surely be reasonable after a while!

Wouldn't it be better if those letters, which Colette wrote at night with her cheeks all aglow, with her hands all a-tremble in the cold, solitary room, and with beating heart and deathly anxiety—wouldn't it be better if those letters should finish behind the broken flowerpots and waste piled in the rear of the garden, where the rain might wash away the tender words? Monsieur Grignoir could wait, for he was worldly wise. The mother had granted Colette four weeks in which to reflect.

The colder Colette grew toward her cousin, the heartier became his handclasp, and the more warmly did his gray eyes glitter with desire as her slender form slipped into the salon.

Surely she would soon discover how foolish she had been. He assumed a conciliating air. Every young girl must have her first love affair. She should not be blamed for that. It wasn't her fault. And he had all the energetic aid which Colette's mother could give him.

Colette was awaiting her lover's reply. Weeks went by. She lived through those endless, silent weeks as one half dead, slipping from her bed to the window, waiting, hoping, her gaze turned to the empty, drear, rainy rue Blondlot. But he never came, nobody rang the bell, no sabre clicked

against the ground. In her captivity, Colette learned every sentiment of despairing love.

"Let me out," she begged her mother. And her mother would reply, "As soon as you can be reasonable."

No, no answer came to her many, many letters. No sound from him reached her ears. No evidence had she that he still longed for her. No loving word arrived to comfort and support her. She was beginning to doubt his steadfastness. And now the period of reflection had expired.

One evening Colette's mother spent a long time in Colette's room. This time there was no sound of weeping there. The old woman strained her ears in vain. Poor Colette remained quite still at last. In her eyes was a gleam, as of madness. She was so lovely in her white night-dress, so sweet, so pitiful, so lonely and forlorn, that her mother embraced her, weeping. "My dear, good child—it will be the fortune of your life—I thank you——"

The old servant glided down the stairs, with a frightfully beating heart. All night long she heard, above, the voices, rising and falling, and mingled with Colette's weeping. And on the next day there came the lover, now betrothed, there were the felicitations, there was the general curiosity—all the curious folk of the neighborhood came in. They found Colette pale and lovely, quiet and cold. Grignoir was beaming, Madame Grignoir was joyful, and the wondering eyes of the older guests roved from one to the other, failing to grasp the fact that Monsieur Grignoir was overlooking the truth, that he was merely going to be married, without being loved at all. But then, Grignoir had a particular fashion of dismissing sentimental considerations.

Preparations for the wedding, which was to occur in a few weeks, began with the collection of the trousseau. Here Madame Grignoir displayed feverish activity, Colette looking on with cold indifference. She had assumed something of the quietude of a marble statue, but a wild determination lay concealed behind her seeming calm. Her attitude was one of expectancy. She was waiting, waiting. She was waiting for her lover's letter, that thing upon which everything depended—her future, her peace, her fortune

and her honor. That letter would restore her to life. What was happening, to delay him elsewhere, while she was thus waiting? Colette shuddered and shuddered, as she felt that the end of all things was approaching. And all her limitless youth protested against the outcome.

As she entered the wide promenade for the first time since her betrothal, walking beside her mother, they came upon a group of officers standing at a corner of the Grand Gallery Café. The officers glanced at the oncoming pair and one of them looked at Colette, who had become very pale, with a scornful smile. He did not bow at all. His eyes said, "I was right. You have not been true to me!"

Colette received that glance as she would have received a sudden stab. She turned around, and retreated, as if dazed, uttering frightful sobs, her mind perceiving nothing save that terrible look received from her lover's eyes. From that moment she thought only of seeing her lover again. She did not understand what could cause him to forsake her in her deadly pain and distress. She was broken and exhausted. She loved him now as she had on the very first day. She could never forget him, she would remain ever true to him, and yet she was facing the prospect of being wedded to another.

Sorrow raged and stormed in Colette's mind, concealed by her hot brow. Little did she care whether any one observed her or not. Grignoir pushed forward the wedding preparations with feverish haste. Silken carpets were laid in the little castle near by, and the old, worn tapestry of the chairs was replaced by new. Furniture of all kinds was provided. Grignoir superintended everything. Colette stood looking on, pale and silent, and as if all this had no concern whatever for her. Madame Grignoir tried to efface Colette's indifference by hearty praise of Grignoir's good taste in his arrangements.

Why, when Colette was really his wife, she would become interested in her new existence, for the poor child really knew nothing at all about life. A strange tranquillity had come over Colette. She wrote no more letters. She was too tired to write vainly any more. Her lover no longer believed in her. "You have been untrue to me," his

eyes had said. His contemptuous glance had stirred everything within her, instead of paralyzing her. She wanted to see him at least once more. It mattered not where.

Her confidante, the old housekeeper, had finally begun to prepare to accompany Colette on the last difficult venture. She slipped away, on the pretence of making a purchase. It was raining and the town was already dark beneath the gray sky. The streets were glistening mysteriously with sparkling raindrops, upon which the red lights of the street lamps were shining. Colette left the servant at the corner of the barracks and proceeded toward the newer houses, where he lived. The venture was very doubtful, it was a last chance, but that was all she wanted. She had to seek him. She had to tell him the truth which he did not believe. She had to tell him that she loved him in spite of all—to assure him that she could never marry any one else. No longer was it possible for her to marry that other man. She had realized the terrible thing for several days.

Colette's tall form, veiled in its bluish mantle disappeared within the door of a house. The old servant's heart beat loudly. Supposing Monsieur Grignoir had seen her here! How difficult it was to serve two masters! She reproached herself that she had not opposed Colette's departure and that she had allowed herself to be persuaded to accompany her. She was thus protecting and sheltering a great wrong, from which God knew what still greater evil might arise! And the longer she remained at the bleak, red door of the German barracks, walking up and down, the harder did her heart pound under her cloak.

It grew later and darker. The bedtime call rang out through the barracks, marking ten o'clock. And still the old servant wandered to and fro, her anxious glances searching the house fronts as she sought fearfully among all the doors along the deserted street.

Colette did not come back. Nobody saw her again. Nobody saw her, as she left the yellow house, her eyes feverish with weeping, to go away into the night. She had taken her leave of him. His last kiss was upon her lips as she tried to express her despair. She had been betrayed.

She had never received his letters. Not one of those which he had written her had reached her, in spite of her pain and danger. The German postman had brought them to the Grignoir house, but strange hands had intercepted them, strange hands, paid for their dishonesty. All her truth and fidelity had been effaced with gold.

Now Colette was facing the night, the yawning, terrible night. Marriage with Grignoir was a crime and a shame. Colette walked along the quiet river, winding its way through the town like a gray serpent, beneath the leafless maple trees. The last person who ever saw her alive was an old fireman, coming back from the lively promenade concert. Yes, he had noticed the tall, slim lady, wandering up and down along the river bank.

Two days later they found her at the little sandy stretch near the Quai de la Bataille, at the fishermen's landing. She was lying in the bend of the river, and the sky was gray and sodden with heavy rain. Her golden hair was still shining, and upon her face lay the look of peace, bestowed by eternal sleep.

In the letter which she had left for her mother she had said only that she must go forth. A year later, Madame Grignoir married her cousin.

No special changes occurred in their lives. They remained living in the same house. Monsieur Grignoir paid a visit to the City Hall. In the castle, the blinds were all closed about the new decorations and all that was neglected and ignored. It was very astute of Monsieur Grignoir to marry, since he was shortly afterward suddenly paralyzed throughout his right side. The marriage was a reasonable and quiet one, and much more peaceful than one with Colette could have been, for she was of German blood and had sentimental feelings. The only disquieting thing about the marriage was the old housekeeper herself, who, after Colette's death, seemed to have lost her reason and kept going to early mass to be absolved of her sins, until, one day, she said she could no longer live in the gray house with the Grignoirs, because Colette's ghost wandered about on the flowered carpets and she could hear the sound of weeping every night.

So she bought her little shop, and sold consecrated candles, rosaries and pictures of the saints, and there in the little shop she died.

Never has Madame Grignoir ceased to grieve for her daughter. She still lives in the town, in the old house in the rue Blondlot. She goes every day to her daughter's grave, to carry there a wreath of white roses and to pray for her poor soul.

CAMEROONS DREAMS

By FRIEDRICH MULLER

I

FOR two days I had been traveling within the deep forest of the Cameroons and, while these two days lasted, I continued to be the most important, the best and the happiest of men, for I was then admiring every new thing about me. He who admires is always blessed. There I encountered the vast and ponderous trunks of trees which, perfectly round and straight, mounted from deep blue shadows to display in the sunlight above the green roof formed by their immense foliage. There I fought my way through the great lianas, wonderfully big and white, which were so closely interlaced from root to summit that they were united as firmly high in air as they were at the level of the soil. Tufts of moss, whose every node bore expanding clusters of filamentous orchids, abounded. Everywhere below the leafage extended the verdure of spreading ferns, lifting themselves aloft to catch every possible droplet of rain or dew. The thick, soft humus, the impenetrable silence and the sudden roaring of invisible cascades heard strangely at bends in the route, spread above and all around a heavy curtain, a formidable sense not of age, but of an unceasing flow of time. Travelers usually speak of feeling crushed or stifled in such forests, but for my part, I felt a sense of security naturally imparted by Time and a sort of mute expansiveness created by the delightful warmth. The eternal plant growth comforts the human soul because of the impression of stability which it produces. In spite of the pleasure, however, I felt a sense of joy and relief, never before experienced, on arriving at the first village and perceiving it from afar in a clearing.

The village was called Adiana, and the delicious lightness of the name was reflected in the dwellings. They were

all of golden bamboo and perched, like bird-cages, on long, slender piles of pale colored wood which supported them above a ravine. Blackbirds were singing everywhere. My excellent bearers galloped forward at the sight. They laughed gayly as they traversed the village, with playful pretense of frightening the women, children and old people and leaping and shouting until they were out of breath. With a single wild rush they mounted the red-colored slope before them, at whose top shone the administrator's house, also woven of bamboo.

A man immediately appeared upon the little balcony about the house, shaded his eyes with his hand, and cried, "What! You—and really here!"

I was already out of my filanzana, or traveling hammock. "Stein!" I cried, joyfully greeting my dear friend, who leaped forward to clasp my hand in a hearty grip. My crew gathered around us for a moment, then, seeking more material joys, they began to stamp about on the ground, as a prelude to a swift rush about the village, their white, fluttering garments making them look like a swarm of racing women.

Joseph Stein held me by the arm exactly as he had done, long ago, during our talks in the corridors of the university. "I am going to talk to you," he said, "in the Cameroon fashion, which expresses hospitality in the most poetical way in the world. Friendship is life's choicest perfume. Let my fire be thy fire, let my roof be thine."

"Thank you, thank you. Do you live alone?"

"Absolutely alone," Stein studied me attentively. After a rather awkward moment of silence he continued, "Not a wife, not a cat! Absolutely alone. Have you ever thought what the Garden of Eden must have been before Eve appeared?"

Only then, and because of a nasal tone of irony in his voice which was quite strange to me, did I realize that fifteen years, and all the unknown things of that long lapse, lay between us.

"This way," said Stein.

"Oh!" I cried, suddenly.

The room which I had entered was hung with braided vegetable fiber of the color of sunlight, suggesting that the Madagascar plant from which it was obtained might well contain gold.

Against this background of light, a thousand butterflies were spreading their many-colored wings. At first the sight of the general scintillation halted me with a moment of involuntary fear. A second look showed that the confusion was only apparent, and that the insects were arranged according to a certain plan, and after the prismatic spectrum.

Nearest me was a rank or band of red butterflies and above them masses of orange, yellow and green, while the blue, dark-blue, lavender and violet insects extended near the top of the wall. The butterflies were not alive, but the brilliant colors conveyed such an impression of life, and of joyous, effervescing life, that they imparted a marvelous sense of spiritual pleasure.

"Well, well!" I exclaimed. "I have seen so many governors and administrators surrounding themselves with ores and gems, and thinking that their district is a land of gold or silver, that I am delighted to find here, in your home, this really wonderful tapestry——"

"You don't say so!" he interrupted, with a low chuckle, while his glance became sharper as he seemed to probe me in a rather curious and morbid way. "So most of my colleagues prefer minerals, then?" And with brightly shining eyes, he repeated, "You interest me, you interest me deeply!"

"All the same," I couldn't help saying, after a few moments, "it is very odd that you, the most earnest of us all, have become an ardent lover of the most capricious and fickle creature in the world."

He replied, with quick emphasis, "Don't use those words. That idea is as false, sentimental and empty as the language people have ascribed to flowers. The butterfly does not deserve the reputation of fickleness and lightness which has been fastened on it by men, and especially by women. What did you mean, anyhow? Were you thinking of the butterfly's visits to different flowers? Why, the bee, the

wise bee, does the same! You forget that the butterfly is not interested in the bright colors of the blossoms, but in their juices! The juices! The butterfly is always faithful to those. Do you mean the butterfly's amours? Well, do you realize that the male butterfly makes a long and dangerous journey of many miles, flying day and night, to find the female? And do you perceive that he finds the female with a quickness and accuracy much superior to that needed for finding the flowers, which supply his food? In other words, don't you see how faithful and sure he is in his love? What better evidence do you want of faithfulness and surety in an insect?"

"Well, then, you think we'll have to rehabilitate this amorous creature?"

"Certainly!" Stein didn't even smile. "The only fickle creatures on earth are women. And even their fickleness is not due, as people so often suppose, to mental lightness, but really to their fidelity to a fixed idea, which consists of the excessive admiration which they maintain for themselves throughout their lives. Ah! It may well be that certain lovely butterflies or moths, which revolve about each other as long as they live because they seem to like their own forms, are called 'Narcissi.' But if this is true, how much truer is it that the same name should be pinned on women, for the same reason!"

The meal we had together was delicious. The menu showed the attention Stein was paying to have me taste the finest products of the region he loved so much, loved as if he owned it all. The meal was topped by that magic nectar, black coffee, which makes the delights of dreams sparkle still more enchantingly by day; and all the time my eyes kept wandering, in spite of me, back and forth over the silks and velvets of those unexpected butterflies which added the last touch to the sorcery of the place.

After the rum, Stein rose and wrote on a slate the menu for dinner which he wished his *boto*, or native servant to follow. Then, turning to me with a smile of friendly malice, he asked, "What do you say to a turn in the garden?"

II

We were situated on one of the edges of the great forest whose treetops were fairly sizzling above us on every hand in the bright, hot sunlight. In the lights of the afternoon, the verdure of the foliage became hardened and darkened to a deep blue, which made the mass of color appear like the heavy, solid aspect of a mountain of malachite.

From the very instant I set my foot upon the threshold of this scene, and also partly due, without the least doubt, to Stein's persistent silence, I was aware of feeling ill at ease in an atmosphere crazily fluctuating and filled with animal restlessness.

"Why don't you look around you?" cried my host.

Well, the whole air, the whole region beneath the trees, every speck of the undergrowth about, were filled with fluttering, swarming butterflies. They came forth from hollow tree-trunks like bees from hives. They flew out from marbled or porous rocks. They emerged from the purple and amethyst leaves of the palm trees. They issued from dark shrubs which, like the orange trees, were starred with white buds. They appeared from the moss and crept from beneath the leaves. They were mingling everywhere, now appearing distinct, now merging in the throngs, and seemed, as in a legend, to be endowing the forest with fairy life.

Some flew straight toward the sky, as if seeking the sunlight. Others climbed from branch to branch of the trees, as if looking for flowers. Many plunged headlong into the shadows as if searching for honey. Still others merely fluttered idly about, as if simply for the pleasure of flying here and there. But most of all the immense number about us turned in perpetual spiral about themselves, like species of brilliant convolvulus, and as if preferring the pleasures of love to every other object. Their ways of flying were as different as are the songs of different birds. This immense, thrilling, tremulous pattern of colors seemed to be a secret murmur breathed from the immense, motionless forest.

Stein laid his hand on my shoulder. "You may write," said he, "that the Cameroons continue to be the earthly

paradise of the finest butterflies under heaven. In order that I might be surrounded all the time by the greatest possible number of these innocent and unreal creatures, I have taken special pains to collect here all the plants and the minerals which they like best. I have thus, so to speak, a collection of the living insects. I have the most majestic Antenor, the most elegant Diadema, the most iridescent Precit, the transparent Acraca, scintillating Salamis, and most brilliant of the swarm, the golden Butterfly, or Royal Insect. The finest one, though, or rather the most lovely one, queen of them all, is the Actias Comètes, existing only in central Africa. It is a comet and an orchid at the same time. It is pearly white, like the moon, and flies beneath the trees only at night."

The expression on Stein's face had mysteriously changed. I suddenly recognized a peculiar look, as if Stein were a victim of hallucinations—a look which I have frequently observed in officers whose duties are of a scientific kind. Among official scientists of this type I recall a professor of geology at the University of Munich who, sent out on a scientific mission requiring a year's absence, had become affected by his travel and would not return home. I have known physicians and an agronomist who were exactly similar in this respect. These fine fellows, always very much in earnest, always restless, always of humanitarian cast, are haunted, in their new tasks as organizers, by the studies which have been interrupted and by theories which they are always dreaming about. It is no wonder they often seem absent-minded.

Just now Stein was smiling into empty air, as if illuminated by a Hindoo fakir's beatitude. Partly to please him, I asked, "What do the natives think about the butterflies?"

"Well, my dear chap, they have a superstitious admiration for them which seems to be the last glow of a religion based on immortality. You see, one of the native tribes has the custom of enveloping the dead in silk, just like real cocoons. This is done because the natives think that the soul escapes from the body after this life is over, just as the butterfly comes forth from the chrysalis. And the

natives use the same word, *lolo*, to express both the butterfly and the human soul."

Stein had guided me toward the interior of the forest without awakening my attention to our progress. The ground rose, gradually and insidiously, as we advanced. We were following a trail worn by savage feet in a rusty-reddish clay where enormous centipedes were crawling about like verdigris-colored snakes.

As we mounted higher and higher Stein ran over the curious names given by the natives to the great trees which made a sort of ancestral twilight above our heads. One was called "the lightning attractor"; another, the "canoe-makers' tree"; another, the "coffin tree"; another, the "rice-mortar tree"; and another, the "beehive tree." Most of the trunks looked much alike. They were of ebony, and the wood beneath the bark was of different hues, black, pink, green or violet, for there are many varieties of ebony.

The narrow path suddenly broadened and we could walk side by side, instead of in file. Stein remarked, quite abruptly, and without preparing me for his observation, "My passion for butterflies, which must seem strange to you, is all that is left of my love for a woman." And then he went on to explain.

"One Sunday afternoon, when I was about twenty-three, while attending a museum discussion on the fish living at great depths, I was especially attracted by a young girl near me, who was listening to the talk with an interest which was so intense that she seemed actually in love with the subject. I was so struck by the ecstasy of intelligence which she manifested that I didn't at first notice the ethereal beauty of her face. She was dark, with blue eyes of changing shades, a straight nose, and very pure profile, over which a velvety and dreamlike expression floated, as one sees in the women's faces painted by Rubens. I might never have seen that face again, but I assure you I could never have forgotten it.

"Next morning I found her studying at the museum library, at a desk just opposite mine. She left at noon, carrying under her arm a large, dark box. Perhaps she

was aware that I would follow her, perhaps not. At any rate, I did follow her, and directly. She entered a path in the Botanical Garden. I didn't let her get away from me. I approached, and bowed, and made stumbling excuses and was, of course, very much embarrassed. Her long eyelashes trembled so much over her suddenly darkening eyes that I wondered if she had even noticed me until that moment. But it was too late. I dizzily told her my name and asked hers, not knowing what else to say.

"She replied, with an easy dignity that relieved my anxiety, 'My name? Hildegard Kayserberg,' and, as her glance rested on me with a curious expression of melancholy, she added, 'daughter of Heinrich Kayserberg.'"

"Kayserberg!" I cried, quite amazed. "What! The author of 'The Life of the Swallows,' 'The Nightingale' and the 'Esthetics of the Nest'?"

"Yes, Kayserberg himself."

His eyes became sad, and he went on, "I told her that she must be proud of that noble name, which was continually becoming still greater. 'It is true,' she agreed, modestly, 'but scientific fame produces few real results. During my father's whole life, my mother was obliged to work, to help maintain the family.'

"When will the State ever aid and protect its fine intellects? May I call and see your mother some day?"

"Certainly," she replied, with a cautious smile showing full appreciation of the situation, as she held out her hand.

"As I took that hand, I was surprised and experienced a feeling as of sudden disappointment, for it was very oddly cold—very cold. But it was also curiously limp, almost transparent, and so impalpable that I wanted to hold it and study it, it was so wonderfully fine. In fact, the charm of this young girl was largely composed of a certain air of mystery, of intangible poetry, which was also somewhat imperious. She seemed a being of another world, and made up of airy fabrics, light and many colored. She was a sort of human rainbow.

"What a delicate hand!"

"It has to be delicate, for my work."

"And that is——"

“‘I spread out butterflies.’

“I should not have suspected such an occupation for such a young girl. It seemed not the work for a young, charming girl. I was really astonished. Her words, spoken as they were amid the flowers, so captivated me that I knew at once that it was all over with me. I felt in my bones that I should ask to marry that girl. She couldn't help noticing my deep interest, and opened the dark box she was carrying. It was full of glowing colors, spread on the wings of butterflies, and the loveliest shade of all was a deep, heavenly blue. ‘That one,’ she said, ‘is the great Morphos, of Brazil.’

“She and her mother lived in the Botanical Garden of Berlin. The house was one of those old structures covered with vines, which seem fashioned especially to preserve family idyls. The tables, books, scientific instruments and the whole atmosphere of the place told of the dreamy spirit guarded by close and exact study which is peculiar to the habitations of great scientific minds. I entered that atmosphere with a dual emotion, a mixture of love and reverence. My own words, those uttered simply by the mother, whose hair was noticeably whitening, and the talk of the young girl herself seemed to breathe about all of us a thoughtful calm which tranquillized us and made us seem to understand each other. My heart had moments when it beat curiously fast and hard, as if touched and modified by that fine intelligence possessed by Hildegarde.

“In April came the first cooings of the wild pigeons, perched in the cedar trees. I was about to speak, but Hildegarde anticipated me, as in a childish sort of game, ‘We are engaged, aren't we, from this very day?’

“It was springtime, and I was fairly crazy with joy. The betrothal of hearts and minds is made for eternity. And to her love for me, Hildegarde added an intense love for science, inherited from her father. For a year I lived in an extraordinary sort of intoxication. We were exploring the universe together. We advanced, as it were, hand in hand, our minds in constant union. We scarcely knew whether we were led on by the passion of our love for each other or by our worship of science. So we studied together

anthropology, mineralogy, astronomy and even radiology. For that new science Hildegarde was all on fire, as she was in our married life. She supplied a lovely background and setting for all our talk, our plans and our hopes. Her intelligence was very original. She had sudden intuitions which were brilliantly illuminating. These intuitions of hers puzzled me and stimulated my interest and curiosity, and imparted great confidence in Hildegarde and in our future. And besides, all the talk about us was of praise and gossip of those inventions and discoveries.

"All this time we were still unmarried. How could we marry? I had only enough to support me without entailing actual want and privation. Hildegarde was just making her living. She had acquired incomparable skill in spreading and mounting butterflies for a former explorer in Borneo, who made a business of selling fine butterflies and moths. The man sold these specimens for sums which were like those brought by the sale of so many jewels, but all Hildegarde got out of it was a wage like that of those poor old women who fold newspapers for the streets.

"In spite of it all, though, we agreed to get married as soon as I passed my last examination. My lovely fiancée worked at her window from morning to night, until her eyes were in danger of harm from the fine, irritating scales flying loose from the butterflies' wings. I was busy all day with my own work, and at night with writing on all sorts of subjects. I prepared popular articles on our former colonies, which I had not then visited, and wrote for scientific journals, farm almanacs, and industrial and trade papers. To get a few francs by thus working together only increased our love for each other.

"One afternoon, as we were approaching the end of my last year of technical study, I was at work near Hildegarde in her father's former office. Suddenly Hildegarde asked me, 'How much, my dear, are you thinking of providing for my clothes when we get married?'

"I was amazed at such a question, coming from her, the daughter of a man of science. Besides, she had said to me, the evening before, in one of those poetic and tender bursts of hers, that she felt herself vowed to science as

the old nuns and abbesses used to consecrate themselves to God, and that, if necessary, she would be perfectly willing to dress in cheap, coarse fabrics all her life.

"‘You see, poor Joseph,’ she said, following up her question, and smiling as with a lofty sort of pity, ‘you see very well how this little incident has created a terrible abyss between us. We love each other just now as perhaps we shall not love each other again, and I don’t want small things to cast the least shadow on this love of ours.’

"I don’t know what I said to her. I murmured some poor, unintelligible words.

"‘Besides,’ she continued, ‘I was only testing you, and testing myself. My question clearly shows how dangerously we have been living, only in dreams, and apart from all practical things.’

"I was more and more amazed and grieved. I noticed how her eyelids were fluttering from her concealed emotion.

"‘I have made the test,’ she said. ‘As an ordinary physician, married young and perhaps soon burdened with a family, you will lose out, you will fail, not only in general science, but in your profession as well. Listen to me, Joseph. I have seen my poor father’s difficulties and sufferings. And to preserve our happiness, I ask you to make the sacrifice which is necessary. I want you to seek a position in the colonies, some fair situation, no matter where. In this way you can save up something from your salary, and both of us will work very earnestly, you in the colony, I in Berlin. You must send me things which are valuable and costly, such as gold, pearls, precious stones, valuable plumage, all sorts of such things, and even rare butterflies.’

"‘Humph! Butterflies!’ I cried, thinking that she was making fun of me.

"‘Yes, butterflies,’ she answered, with a serious and professional air. ‘I know what I am talking about. You have no idea how buyers of butterflies are increasing. People are going crazy over them. This man I work for divides these buyers into two classes. There are, for instance, people who dream of women because they don’t know them and desire them, such as rich and *chic* students and young priests; and there are also those who think of

women, and who long for them. This class includes the old flirts, melancholy savants, and solitary old Don Juans. Why, at this very moment I know of an old man who steals money from his relatives to get the rarest specimens of butterflies. Believe me, and do what I tell you to. When we get enough money, by thus working as well as we can apart, we can then get married and have nothing to spoil our joy.'

"I was seized with despair, but she was so brilliantly tender about it all that I agreed, and our sad agreement took on the poetical character possessed by a new religious vow. I never went back to the university, not wishing to see my comrades and you any more. And, to avoid reflecting, I at once sought a post in our former colonies."

As Stein was speaking, his glance flickered savagely over the rocks, trees and foliage.

"I am naturally jealous," he resumed. "I have always firm and stable things, and could never be happy unless I was with the woman I loved. I was gone for three years. Young, in love, and uneasy as I was, you can imagine how I counted the days! Well, I was finally able to return to Berlin and, of course, the natural thing had occurred. No sooner did I see Hildegard than I realized that she was no longer the person she had been. Now she was dressed in bright colors. Her talk was quite altered. She had a queer laugh. She no longer cared for the authors whom she had loved. As for science, that was a thing of the past. She was completely transformed. Perhaps it was a case of metempsychosis as well as of metamorphosis. Young girls are like that, when they think they are becoming real women." And Stein gave his dry chuckle, which disagreeably revealed his too brilliant teeth.

"Well," I asked, "did your fiancée never explain herself?"

"Oh, yes, with suggestions made in the tenderest and most brilliant way imaginable. She had more than mere force—she was persuasive. Had she been merely frivolous or a flirt, I should have got off easily, but her womanliness made her really very seductive. Her complexion was delicate and soft, and so was her voice. She had a trick of becoming silent, which drew me on with a sense of sus-

pense. Somehow I could not get very near her. She was remote. I was obliged to feel and grope, and to recognize in her a sort of poetry which made her enigmatic and held her aloof.

"On the anniversary of our betrothal I said to her, 'Hildegard, you must remember that I have come for you from the other side of the world.' She was happy and proud, quickly came close to me and gave me a long kiss. Then she straightened up and said, in her purest voice, 'A woman can be only faithful where you are concerned. I don't wish to penetrate your life, and I wouldn't have even the shade of an afterthought about you. Since you have come back, though, I find myself hiding something from you. I have wanted to tell you, every day, but haven't dared, thinking that you may mistake for a mere caprice, or something still worse, what is really an imperious need of my nature. I must travel, I must know the world.'

" 'But that is just what——'

" 'You will show me Africa. Now, I want a few months in America first. I think and dream of America all the time. I must satisfy this desire of mine. That ought not to trouble you very much. And, in order that the Yankee gentlemen, who like young and intellectual French women so much, may understand that I am no longer free, your ring shall never leave my finger.'

"At that instant, all I felt was a sense of irony. 'Why the sudden love of travel?' I asked.

" 'Why!' she exclaimed, in astonishment. 'Papa was interested in birds all his life. Is it surprising that he may have handed down to his daughter a passion for space?'

"In my masculine fidelity, I tried to talk on and to grasp what was intangible. She threw her arms about my neck and cried, 'No, no, my dearest friend on earth, don't try to talk. I have guessed everything. You were simply lonely, in that great island where you have been. Why don't you make a marriage with some native woman, a sort of temporary marriage? And I promise you that I will come to replace her in two years, surely, without fail.'

"I thought I must be going crazy. And I went away. Her mother explained next day, that in the butterfly shop

where Hildegarde was employed, a young American, named Robinson, had chanced to appear. He was a naturalist, Alpine climber, and film operator. Through this young man, an immense concern, a huge commercial firm, which had built practically a town close to Potsdam, this big American movie establishment had invited Hildegarde to come to its headquarters and spread out and mount butterflies for their films. The house was producing a pseudo-scientific film to be shown all over the world. Hildegarde had gone wild about the new work. She spread out her butterflies dressed in her white blouse, just as she did always. The operator had had her smile her most seductive smile. And just for posing in that way for a few seconds, she had received a hundred marks in gold.

"I had the key to the situation. Hildegarde was naturally much excited at the idea of having herself thus shown everywhere in the world, but the main idea was the gold, the money, she might get. Gold had thrown its reflection over her. She was dazzled. Daughter of a poor scientist as she was, and herself exploited in her work, she had caught a glimpse of a world where fortunes were made in a flash. She had perceived not only one new world, but two—America and the Movies."

I suddenly jumped as a strange "Oo-hoo-oo-hoo" resounded through the trees. Some hidden lemur, which had doubtless been following us by leaping from branch to branch, and frightened at seeing us penetrate the fastnesses of his woods, was fleeing, uttering his cry, so like that of a mad woman.

Stein continued, without lifting an eyelash. "The decree was written above. Just one month after my return to Germany the girl who was to have taken the boat with me for the Indian Ocean was adrift on the Atlantic going toward the skyscrapers. It is almost ten years since that happened." And Stein counted over on his fingers, "Philadelphia, Glasgow, Spa, Zurich, Stamboul." These names seemed fantastic when uttered as they were in the middle of the tropical forest.

"There, my dear fellow. Those are the cities where she posed in only a few years, and nearly everywhere she went

there was some man who wanted to marry her." Stein's chest rose as if to expel a deep breath, but only a little, whistling sound emerged from between his clenched teeth. He added, "So I never went back to Europe." After a pause he said, "But here is something I want to show you."

At our right, in a sylvan recess, three enormous black rocks, green with lichens and whitened with moss, upheld, like an antique dolmen, a natural heavy stone slab. The mosses on it had made of it a dull green altar. Orchids streamed over it as if poured forth from a hidden spring of water. Giant, arching ferns mounted about it from the soil below. From above, wild and savage branches of the trees drooped darkly, as if to hide the stone from mortal eyes. It marked the site of an old tomb.

"You see," said Stein, clasping my arm closely in his, "you see, I love these natives. For their houses, for life, they choose the bamboo, the lightest thing the forest yields. But for their graves, for death, they prefer the heaviest and most massive material they can find—stone. Solidity in solitude is what they believe in."

My heart was too heavy to allow a reply. Not a word could I find. I perceived very clearly Joseph Stein would never leave Africa.

At the noonday meal, Stein seemed at first rather embarrassed and as if taking refuge in a sort of masculine modesty, from which his talk had left him stripped morally naked. I thought he avoided my glance. But suddenly, in a voice which showed an astonishing state of meditation, he remarked, "I'm going to tell you the whole thing." And he plunged directly into the story.

"One May morning, two years ago, I was inspecting a village in the upper forest, a few miles away from here, when my native servant, who had been left behind, came running up, saying, 'A *vaz-ha* (white or foreign) woman has just arrived at your house.' I hastily ran over the three or four white women who might be living in the twenty leagues of brush about me. A woman? A white woman?

"Do' know—maybe woman, maybe girl."

"What's she like?"

“‘Do’ know—maybe pretty, for you.’

“I went back at once to the post. Hildegarde was on my veranda. Tall, slender in a brilliant white dress, she was waiting for me as if she had been a Colonial woman all her life. Imagine the shock I received! I assure you that I had so continually thought of her as being here that her appearance at my house did not seem unnatural for a single instant. When she saw me coming she stood at first quite motionless. Then her pupils dilated and she began to appreciate my surprise. She precipitated herself toward me, hastened up and breathlessly seized my arm. And then she put her head down on my breast to hear my heart beat, just as she used to do. ‘My dear, dear Joseph,’ she murmured.

“Her voice was so weak that I saw she was exhausted. I was frightened as I discovered her supreme distress. She was utterly broken, the fragile creature seemed at the last gasp. You cannot imagine the degree of her exhaustion. She could scarcely make a step or a gesture. I thought that she would faint before I could speak to her. In an unreasoning access of strength, which came like a sob, and utterly forgetting everything else, I lifted her in my arms and carried her into the house.

“There I placed her in a comfortable chair. I had food brought to her, and then I sent my *boto* away, so that I might serve and aid her myself. With lowered eyelids, and with a pleasure which she could not hide at seeing a man at her feet, she looked on at my efforts, fixing great, erratic eyes on me, and continually stretching both hands out to me, as if feeling, in a convulsive obsession, a need to hold me near.

“After a few minutes, I couldn’t help asking, ‘Where have you come from?’ She replied, very gently, ‘From Bussa.’

“‘From Bussa?’

“‘Yes. I had married an English magistrate——’

“‘And you’re divorced again?’

“‘No, only separated for a while.’

“‘Ah! What’s happened?’

“‘Nothing, only there is no understanding between us.

He is an egoist. He only cares for hunting outside the house, and only for his graphophone inside it. He was very just, though, and was willing to send me back to Germany by way of the Suez Canal. I insisted on going by way of the Cape of Good Hope, though, so that I might pass near you.'

" 'Hildegarde,' I cried, 'why did you ever leave Germany when I came there to get you?'

" 'My friend, I have had time to reflect on that myself thoroughly. I had a passionate need to know.'

" 'What?'

" 'Oh, I don't know——' And she looked slowly all around the room, finally noticing the butterflies. 'My dear, dear Joseph! How lovely of you not to forget me! I was sure you wouldn't. Joseph, have you noticed that I still have what you used to call my dragon-fly figure? I don't know whether you are like me, but I have never grown older. Wherever I go, every one calls me Fraulein.'

"She had also kept her admirable dark hair, which enclosed her serene forehead by winglike bands on each side of her head. Her profile was still faultless and in the ideal oval formed by her face appeared her enigmatic and attractive mouth, reflecting the seraphic smile evoked by her thoughts. Her intelligence was also intact—I mean, she still had that inexhaustible glitter and play of ideas whenever she began to speak. Her complexion, though, had lost that intangible down, like pollen, which had been more delicate than silk on her pretty skin and had so sweetly softened her face that it had seemed tenderly caressed by the gentlest of affection.

"The Sirocco, though, a sort of dry wind that dries the chest and makes the mouth taste like ashes, was blowing through the forest that day, and I gently fanned her. Little by little, with the smile of a child who is rocked with a lullaby, her eyelids drooped and she fell asleep. I remained on guard there for some moments, looking at her. She was resting in my house like a shipwrecked wanderer, she, who had formerly leaped and played about, but whom I had never before seen asleep. After a while, I went to my office.

"At four o'clock, I was there sending off mail, when I felt an intangible presence coming behind me. She glided closer and I was aware that her arms were raised. Suddenly, on my neck, exactly where she had used to kiss me, and with the same playful intimacy, a cool mouth was placed and two hands seized mine, frantically, as if it were I, this time, whom she wished to keep a prisoner. And she asked me, 'Joseph, my dear, when shall we get married?'

"This woman, who had flown from man to man and from city to city, had simply decided, and quite naturally, that I was awaiting her here, hoping for the day when the winds of her caprice should blow her toward me, after ten years!

"With the shock of the situation, I experienced a sort of dread as I dizzily discovered that neither time nor space existed for her. But, beneath it all—why should I hide it?—I felt strangely moved, and perhaps prepared to love her, to begin over again or to continue, if you like.

"Ah, had we encountered each other at Berlin and in Germany, I should probably have clasped her madly to me and have tried to fix our destinies permanently with a wordless kiss. But here, in the Cameroons forest, overseas, over many lands, beyond all those continents which this almost dying being had traversed as easily as one passes through nightmares, her presence had a sort of somnambulism about it and made marriage between us seem rather more fitting for death than for love.

"And again, while she was holding herself close to me and so faintly breathing, I felt within her, as a demon but half asleep, the presence of her inconstancy, her fickleness, her indefatigable lack of conscience, a lack which is woman's bad angel and which, however weak and cast down, never loses its wings. From that moment, as if in the presence of an indelible stain affecting a loved one, the desire entered my heart, never to leave it, for a simple, firm friendship, infinite and chaste as pity, but not for love.

"She perceived my sentiments as with antennæ. 'My dear friend,' she said, 'I am not seeking a hospital. Nobody has ever considered me as dying or even as convales-

cent. I am obliged to you. In men, pity reveals excellent fathers, but detestable lovers.'

"Her voice was now a faint murmur. Her uniformly tinted face, though pink, was turned toward the window. 'I shall not pass a single night beneath your roof. I am going away this evening.'

"'Why, you don't dream of such a thing!'

"'This very evening,' she replied, stiffening. 'You know my nocturnal habits. I am delighted at traveling in the dark.'

"'But your bearers?'

"'They must be about ready to leave. They said it was very amusing to carry me, because I am so light.'

"'Your idea is not reasonable. Stay and rest for at least a few days.'

"'Rest? I shall have plenty of time for sleeping when I die. I am not weary in the least.'

"I looked at her closely. Not a trace of fatigue could I see. Some strange pride, or affectation, hardened all her features. 'I am expected,' she said. 'I am going on another long journey.'

"'To Australia?'

"She immediately replied, 'No! To the Cape, as you know very well. I expect to stay there for some time. When your heart tells you to come, come there and join me. I say always *au revoir*, and never farewell.'

"'Well, Hildegard, don't you ever feel the need of thinking of the future?'

"'For me, my friend, the future does not exist. Adventure is all I know.'

"'But you want to keep well and strong, if only to enjoy what you like!'

"'I don't like anything.'

"'Excuse me. You like money.'

"'Oh, very little, and in my own way——'

"'Well, explain your way.'

"'I can never enjoy money in any special place. Wherever I halt, I get just enough money to allow me to travel farther.'

"I tried again to reason with her, but all in vain. Hilde-

garde was one of those souls born on the earth without the ability ever to profit by experience. She had not that instinct which provides happiness for women which they cannot foresee for themselves during adolescence. And, in fact, she left at twilight."

Stein ceased talking. I was about to question him, but also remained silent, possibly as moved as he was by that curious need, dear to men, of tasting things which are uncertain. I wondered if he knew what had become, since then, of that daughter of the Great Unknown.

III

The evening preceding my departure had arrived. It had rained all day.

"So you must leave me, you also?" said my friend, proceeding to devote minute attention to my itinerary, bearers and baggage. While we were dining, the moon rose above the tufts of the forest. When we came out on the veranda, it had already changed the valley into an immense crater of silver, at whose bottom boiled the sparkling stream.

"Hark!" said Stein. "The natives are singing."

From the village we heard, like a lullaby a thousand years old, a prolonged, nasal caressing melody.

"What you hear," explained Stein, "is a sort of song which continually repeats the words, 'Ah, there is moonlight—moonlight—moonlight.' Every native has come out of his straw hut and is sitting on the hard-beaten earth where the rice is pounded. There, in a circle, like a chorus, men, young girls, women, children, old folks, intone that refrain until the moon disappears. What do you say to a stroll?"

We went down toward the stream and strolled along its bank, which was white with flowering arums. About us, the fresh thunder of the cascades rumbled louder and louder, as if the influence of the moon increased the subterranean force of the waters. Stein, who was hatless, walked with his eyes raised and saw only the stars. On his face was a strange ecstasy. I mentioned it to him.

He replied, "Yes. It is true. We devote ourselves at night in this country to the stars, perhaps because we

have to beware of the sun so much during the day. And then, I must confess, in my passionate study of the stars I think I have found——”

“What, dear old fellow?”

“The origin of the marvelous coloring of the butterflies, that coloring which is so rich that it resembles earth’s finest treasures, and which is so strange that men have never been able to explain it.”

“Well, tell me. Where does it come from?”

“I thought for a long time,” said Stein, shivering, “that it came from the earth, that it was hidden in the soil. I thought so because long ago when I was with Hildegarde, I felt that minerals, those mysterious substances of the earth’s crust, were the only things that could supply the decorations of the atmospheric mysteries, the butterflies.”

I was surprised as I listened. What do people whom we fondly imagine we know by day think about at night? Stein pursued, “That was what I thought. First, because of the fineness of the coloring, which is like that of minerals. Second, because of the similar brilliancy, and third, because of corresponding harmony in their alloys, or mixtures. For of all things found on earth, we see only in butterflies these miraculous combinations of violet and antimony, of black and blue, black and green, blue and gold, black on mauve, brassy yellow and gray, yellow and nickel-white, gray and silver. These combinations are fixed and shine within in certain minerals, such as lepidolite, sodalite, peristerite, limonite, erubescite, amber and celestite.

“I was also struck by the fact that the regions where the largest and most beautifully colored butterflies live correspond exactly to those where the most abundant and brightly colored minerals exist. Now, what are the finest and most splendid butterflies in the world? They are those of Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, and the East Indies. And from what regions do we obtain our most valuable minerals? From the very ones I have named. The same shades of color exist alike in the minerals and in the butterflies. The correspondence is better than mere coincidence.”

“Well, the fact is surely striking.”

"Yes, it is. But the explanation, the light, of the puzzle is not, after all, in the earth, but must be sought in the sky, in the sky!"

He gently halted me, and said, as if confidentially, "Now that the moon has declined, look above you. As you look hard at the stars, one after another, what do you see? You see that their light is not the same. The light of Mars is an orange red, that of Aldebaran is purple, and Hercules or, rather, Alpha, in the constellation of Hercules, is scarlet, and so is Antares, the heart of the Scorpion. Betelgeuse glows like a ruby, the stars of Orion are white, and old Sirius is blue.

"These stars are all suns. We know that many stellar systems have two suns, revolving about each other, and sometimes giving light of different color. An emerald and a ruby sun, or purple and sapphire suns, may thus revolve. These facts cause the astronomers to wonder what sorts of curious days, nights and seasons may exist on the unknown planets which gravitate about these colored suns.

"Well, I have often wondered myself, if there was not a period when the earth was itself illuminated by suns of different color, pouring their different spectra into the common atmosphere. Just as Saturn's night is lit by ten moons pursuing each other unceasingly, who knows if our earth's day was not once lit by ten suns of different colors? Just as the stars and everything else in nature are born, live and die, so these suns may have disappeared except the one which has persisted, our golden sun. Just think how inconceivably beautiful our earth must be! It is an Eden continually producing new shades of color, not only in the sky, but on the mountains, in the forests, prairies, lakes, seashore, ocean, and presenting a continual prismatic play of hues which are perhaps not produced by a single sun, but by many suns!

"Now, butterflies are really very wonderful. Like other insects, they were among the first beings to appear in our atmosphere. They must have warmth. They present the largest size and royalet colors only in the tropics, and near the equator. May they not date from that epoch when the earth, warmer than now because warmed by more than

one sun, was continually in the play of starry rainbows and changing lights, whose reflections were caught by the butterflies' wings?

"Again, remember those spots on their wings, commonly called 'eyes.' Now, do not these spots, rings and haloes seem the very images of these vanished suns? And the butterflies' colors suggest a mineral origin quite possibly because the stars and suns contain the very same metals and other elements as those present in the earth.

"It is a strange fact that the naturalists have bestowed celestial names on many of the butterflies. There are, for instance, the Saturnia, Vulcan, Jupiter, Heliothis, Actias Lunæ, Selene, Lunosa, Asteris, Satellita, Nebulea and Urania. Well, what do you think of all this?"

"It is a fine conception, at any rate."

"Why," cried Stein, with a sort of sad enthusiasm, "all this may be termed a theory which has the advantage of harmonizing and calming the heart and mind."

"Well, how far do you carry your idea?"

"My dear fellow, I may go pretty far. Everything is infinite. As I can explain the changing colors of the butterflies by the changing colors of different suns, can I not also explain the curious uncertainties of certain of the daughters of men by light derived from wandering stars, become invisible—by some occult Vega or some straying Venus? Destiny makes us gravitate about such women and become satellites of them, and they are able to illuminate or darken us, in turn. Shall our joys and sorrows originate less from living beings than from stars?

"You can't escape the conclusion! Scientists and physicians, the best informed people on earth, assert that this dependence is still closer than was ever supposed by magi and astrologists. It is a proven fact that stars and meteors, by means of ethereal waves not yet fully analyzed, influence the nervous systems of human beings. What may be considered on earth a disorder or discord may be, from the viewpoint of the universe, a system and order, a real superior and remote symphony. Does not man in his troubles turn ever toward the infinite skies? Remember the consolation uttered by old Dante on arriving at the

boundary of hell: 'And thence we issued, again to behold the stars!'"

As this solitary imagination thus mounted higher and higher, I was moved as by a grand song. Should not the links between analogies be perceived by many minds? I turned towards Stein as if we were to separate forever in the palpitating night.

My friend suddenly stopped and his hand fell heavily upon my breast as he exclaimed, "It is exactly at this bend in the road that I was permitted to see Hildegarde for the last time."

"Perhaps, though, you will see her again, some day," I cried.

"No, never again." Stein's voice was hard as he raised his head. And, as though lifting a secret weight from his heart, he continued, "Listen to the terrible ending. After leaving me, Hildegarde went to Porto Novo. There, instead of waiting four days for the *British India*, either to seize some occasion or through simple impatience, she took a freighter, the *Rajah*, sailing for the Cape. The boat sank before reaching Swakopmond.

"The trip is one where shipwrecks have occurred for centuries, but the wrecked ships are usually those which are crushed by running on the rocks, which are not observed on account of the opaque fogs common to the very distant southern regions. Hildegarde's boat, on the contrary, took fire in an extraordinary way."

"How?"

"Nobody could ever tell exactly, since there were no survivors at all. Observers on the African coast reported that they had seen, in the night, a huge torch on the sea."

Stein repeated the words, in a sort of exaltation. "'A huge torch on the sea.' I keep asking myself, night and day, if I have not some responsibility for that catastrophe. Hildegarde came by the southern route expressly to see me, and I was not able to keep her here. And then, there are her own words, the last words from her, which I never cease to hear repeated. For, as soon as she had mounted into her traveling hammock, she joyfully took from my hands the roses which I had gathered for her.

“‘But where will you dine?’ I asked her.

“She looked at me with an unforgettable glance, all of gold, ‘I shall not dine anywhere. I shall smell your flowers!’”

We went back to the house, and did not speak again. The Tanalas had ceased their singing. Above the vast, sleeping forest shone the black, tropical sky, containing its mysterious lights and shadows and luxuriant with constellations so clear, so bright, so impending and so warm that the whole immensity of the stars seemed to beam lovingly upon the earth.

LOVE AND AVARICE

By ANG. TERZANI

THEY got acquainted one Sunday, at the home of Constantina's parents, in a damp garden in the midst of swampy land and stagnant water. The families of the two were having tea in the pavilion beneath the trees. Through the tunnel-like alley the automobiles and cycle-cars, constantly whirling along the Athens road, could be seen as through a telescope of verdure. Here in the depths of the park, though, movements were limited to the trembling of the foliage, the crawling of insects over the moss, or the slipping of a frog from the tufts covered with dead leaves into the weedy water of some pool or other.

The violet light traversing the windows in the pavilion fell upon ten people at the table. They seemed to have been attracted by the special time and place. The golden evening mist, like an atmosphere within an atmosphere, muffled the chinking of the porcelain, dulled words which were spoken, and seemed to drape thoughts in a fabric of dreams. A sun, so feeble that one felt sorry for it, was caressing the Javanese screen at the threshold. On the table, the little heater attracted the glances of those round it and fixed them firmly to it.

Something had happened. Philip and Constantina knew what. Yes, something had broken the silence and the leafy dome overhead, and was flying with a cry toward the heavens. Their eyes, too timid to confess their joy, avoided each other.

During the betrothal period, their emotions became very sensitive. They met at the edges of the meadows where the slowly advancing herds followed, as they grazed, the gray march of the clouds along the horizon. They went to visit cousins, at Thebes or Athens. They were completely upset when they perceived some little detail simultaneously, such as a vapor suddenly emerging from a ditch and creeping

along the sands in the twilight like a ghostly sheep. Or they were struck by the sudden silence following the stopping of a train during a shower, the roaring of its passage being succeeded by nothing save the whistling of the wind about the cars. In Constantina's home, they silently wept whenever their hands touched, at odd moments when they were in Constantina's little boudoir. In that boudoir there were all sorts of little souvenirs and knickknacks, for she had had a passion for collecting tiny things. There were little ivories, no bigger than a tooth, idols an inch high, and everything in like proportion, for Constantina had a horror of too vast a world and was inclined even to fear that her own body was too large and coarse.

They were married at the beginning of winter, and on a very windy day. Since both families lived at Thebes, the wedding took place at the city hall of the village, the wedding breakfast was given at Philip's home, in a villa sheltered by the hollow of a sandy crescent planted with palms. While the uncles and cousins looked on them benevolently, while awaiting the festal toasts, they looked at the branches overhead extending from the other side of the road paved with pink bricks, and innocently thought of solitude.

At four o'clock they slipped away into the unpeopled stretches of the dunes. There they met enormous clouds of gray fog coming from the invisible sea. The fog parted when it met the pines or birches, suddenly revealing a patch of washed-out blue in the sky, and then closed in again as it drifted over the land. On a knoll of moist sand, odd little oak trees, only a yard high, and bent, twisted and seemingly made of gold, creaked and snapped in the warm wind. Constantina looked tenderly at the oaks and knelt down on mosses so brilliantly green that they were polished like enamels.

The house which was to be their home was situated on the Grande Rue at Acharnai. They went home on the evening of their wedding. Marya, the maid, had decorated all the rooms with white chrysanthemums and lit the little lamp of the tea urn, on the window ledge in the parlor. For a long time they remained side by side without any light. The wind had ceased. People passing along the

road, seeing them, illuminated as they were by the porcelain heater, turned eyes upon them only as long as they looked at other motionless couples who, in the dim parlors, were entertaining reveries as transparent as the china tea things.

Philip had to return to his bank on the second day. He left by the six o'clock train, which was full of tired men, enveloped in smoke, engaged in reading the heavy columns of the *Eleptheros Logos* or *Kathimerini*. He was just like the other men. He was both dense and sensitive, behind his screen of tobacco, and carried in his head a similar array of facts and figures.

Constantina left Acharnai only when going to see her parents at Thebes. Winter was advancing in their garden, carpeted with rotting leaves. After four o'clock many cups of tea were drunk in the parlor, under the lampshade. The fading chrysanthemums seemed magically restored to color by the lamplight. The family talk continued until nightfall. Then Constantina went home, by a train whose route had great curves in it, so that the cars seemed at times to be cutting through the fog by mere chance.

When she got home, she waited for Philip. When she heard his step she closed her book, put a newspaper on the table, and approached the fire. Philip did not touch her. It was she who clasped him tightly to herself. One evening, though, she felt as if imperceptibly repulsed by a muscular pressure made unconsciously by her husband. She left the parlor and went off and cried in a linen closet, her forehead pressed against a pile of napkins. At table, they spoke to each other only when Marya was in the room. After nine o'clock they felt a distress never expressed in words. When the cuckoo clock in the vestibule struck ten, Philip said, "Go to bed, my dear, I must stay awake late tonight, for I have some work I must do."

One evening, when she complained of headache, he prepared aspirin for her and, sitting on the bed, felt her pulse. She threw her bare arms around his neck. He tore himself away as from a leper, and left her, without a word.

Constantina's parents did not begin to whisper their mis-

givings to each other until the spring arrived. A family friend had chanced to meet Philip along one of the Athens streets in the special quarter of town. The women were always sitting at their windows, like gentle, well-fed animals, on both sides of the strip of black water, where oily circles imprisoned refuse and offal. They stared at these motionless maelstroms from morning to night with their clear eyes. There the warehouses, with blue doors framed in façades of blackened brick, reflect a light softer and greener than that reflected by clouds, for it is permeated by exhalations from the sycamore, by the mists from stagnant waters and by a thousand vague flashes and shadows. The round arms, the breasts and the wide hips of these women distend their thin house dresses and dressing gowns and suggest, instead of sharp and keen debauchery, indescribable pleasures of a drowsy and maternal sort. It was with one of these nurses of childlike men that Philip had been seen talking. The woman was a massive blonde, well rouged. She had been standing on the pavement, with her powerful and consoling arm on Philip's shoulder. She spoke in a drawl and with astonishing puerility. Philip had descended the little flight of steps leading down from the pavement level, and had rapidly retreated along the quay, illuminated by green light reflected upon him.

A few days later, and on a Sunday, he took Constantina to the seashore at Piræus. She liked to go to this bathing resort, where she had spent the summers in her childhood days. Seated in front of a café, they could overlook the swarms of people on the beach. For a stretch several miles long, thousands of people were herded in between the flat sea and the rim of the dunes. Joyful cries of laughter and confused words melted together in a sad sort of murmur. Constantina, who was always made melancholy by the sight of crowds, looked at a distant heap of sand or cloud of foam, mysteriously lighted up.

Philip centered his attention on a waitress, a peasant woman of unsymmetrical figure, whose bare arms seemed like sticks of wood touched with a paint brush. He watched her approach, bringing on a tray the *clouzico*. He could not take his eyes off her raw, crude hands with the

swollen fingers. One could not tell whether they were affected by some disease or were merely a sign of exuberant health. When she gave him his change, some impulse made him furtively touch her pink, stumpy arms, with an attraction mingled with disgust. He perceived that Constantina had noticed his action, and blushed. He would have liked to explain, to cry out, break a glass, or kick something, but remained silent, sitting heavy and motionless on his chair.

Now, for an hour, he had been scolding, his voice altered with anger. He is accusing Constantina of neglecting her household duties. He had asked, the evening before, to have a dish of rice prepared in Armenian style. Philip had been desiring this spicy food for a long time, but Constantina has not been able to find the necessary spices, and so a big, fat turbot, smothered in a white sauce, had been served.

At first Philip placidly accepted his wife's explanations, but was seized with anger on leaving the table. His wrath is without venom, and he utters clumsy and repeated words of blame, which he throws out as if throwing wood deliberately on a fire. Constantina understands that the thing goes deeper than her husband's words, but continues to play the part of an incompetent housekeeper. In order that he may assert his authority and claim the victory, she admits that she has been lacking.

Philip strides up and down the parlor, from the window to the chair where Constantina is sitting. Marya has not yet brought in the teapot, but the porcelain heater is lighted in front of the window and its golden and milky light is beginning to glow in the twilight. Philip ceases his exclamations. He feels a need to dominate, destroy, show his force otherwise than by mere words. He seizes the heater, throws it on the floor and stamps on it. Constantina rises, affected to the depths of her soul by that act. She realizes that this extinguished flame, these bits of broken porcelain, cracking beneath a man's heel, are herself. This is her own body, her own person broken and profaned in a mad drunkenness of possession, hate and love.

Systematic persecution began shortly afterward. Every

week Philip gave Constantina the money for her household expenses. One Sunday evening he announced that he could provide nothing until the end of the month. Without a word, she used the money she had saved before her marriage. On the first of the following month he gave her a thousand drachmas. "I am buying land," he said. "I shall have no more money free for two weeks. Make the necessary arrangements."

Once when the household bills had been presented, she ventured to ask for a thousand drachmas. He was seized with one of his temper fits which were becoming more and more frequent, and threw down on the table a fifty-drachma note. In two months, all her little savings had melted away and still Philip's strange avarice continued. She could no longer hide from the servants this slavery which was oppressing her. She only wanted to resort to her parents if it were absolutely necessary, but she had to yield after the grocer had been refused for the third time. Her father demanded an explanation of Philip, who clumsily complained of Constantina's lack of order and system and drew from his wallet five thousand drachmas which he put back in his wallet as soon as Constantina's old father had gone away.

When she asked him, with her usual gentleness, why she was tormented as she was, he replied, the tears rolling down his immobile face, "I don't know myself. I am making money. We are richer than we were last year. And I love you, just as I have always done."

She clasped him in her arms. He repulsed her. Next day, he savagely twisted her wrists because she accidentally dropped on the marble floor in the vestibule a certain glass ash-tray which he had inherited from his mother.

In the middle of the summer, divorce was terminated. At the moment of the separation they both experienced the gentle emotions felt when they had been betrothed. Had not the decision been finally arrived at through the impatience of Constantina's family and the impalpable mass of differences and scolding which divided them, perhaps they would not have been brave enough to break their miserable relations.

In an access of self-effacement and humility, Philip left the house to Constantina. She used to go out regularly after the one o'clock lunch, avoiding the better parts of the town, where the houses, in stucco, colored light gray, beige, or coffee, had bay windows through which the comfortable interiors could be seen, for these made her strangely sad.

Sometimes she went for bicycle rides in the country. She avoided the houses of her childhood friends, whom she did not wish to meet. Since her walks had to have an object, she would go to some rustic restaurant shaded by poplar trees, to enjoy a view of meadows vibrant with light. There she would drink a cup of the black tea which people stir with a little glass spoon.

On her way home, she could see, in the different houses, tables set for placid family meals. She somehow felt a sense of pity on seeing these honest faces, those homely bodies, whose form had been rounded out, and whose movements had been slowed, by happiness. At home, her knitting and crocheting awaited her. She added a few small meshes to the white roll which must grow for another month in her basket before becoming a useless table cover or chair decoration.

In her parlor, invaded by wandering, orange reflections from the canal, the twilights were interminable. The light from the sky was so faint that one could not tell where the sun had fled to. There were only two red and purplish spots of cloud and fog, each seeming slowly to swallow up the sun.

At nine o'clock Marya brought in the heater and teapot. Constantina swallowed one cup after another as she sat near the window, while behind her the night seemed to emerge from the wardrobes, from the piano, from the carpet, and to melt into one mass loaded with reverie. The cries of the children and those of the swallows could be heard in the distance, seeming to rise and fall like a dust cloud. At last the cathedral clock struck eleven, its echoing peals slowly fading into silence, Constantina not failing to count every stroke.

Toward the end of the first week following the divorce, Constantina had an odd dream over which she reflected

for several days. She was on board a black boat, which was worn out and groaning as it moved. It was midsummer, and she was afloat on a heavy, tropical sea. They had been sailing for years. No land had ever appeared on the horizon, yet she knew that they were not sailing on this ocean of time by mere chance. They were seeking a fair harbor, a blessed isle of plenty, to reward them for the moist planks of the narrow deck, the fishy odors, and the eternal rolling and pitching on the dark blue swell.

Suddenly they arrived at an island. Lofty cliffs rose from the depths below. The rocks seemed to drape the coast line nobly in a rugged fabric. The island was colored a dark violet, and its outermost reefs protruded sharp tips of purple rock above the water. A border of yellowish light ran along the heated crests of stone. In a little bay, dominated by jacinth-colored cliffs, a ship lay motionless at anchor, imprisoned in a sheath of snow and ice. Only one man was visible on board her. He was leaning, calm and smiling, against the gunwale. Constantina was astonished at seeing the icy stalactites, the white, powdery bridges of snow and at the whole polar tableau existing in the warmth of tropical regions. She felt a strange desire to please the enigmatic stranger on board the imprisoned vessel. Behind her, some one hailed him, "Have we arrived? Is this the end?"

"No," answered the man, "you are at the other end of the world. You must go back where you came from."

Constantina felt doubly disappointed. She had traveled halfway round the world and must now go back! The man whom she wanted to impress did not even stir. He looked at her as motionlessly, coldly and politely as his frozen ship floating in the warm waters. Constantina was stifling with humiliation as the boat came about. She suddenly perceived that its funnel had become a tree, casting off mysterious snow flowers with pink and golden petals. The snowy flowers melted away as they touched the deck. The entire vessel, its ropes sheathed in glittering ice, and cakes of smooth ice glued to the ship like shells, were bathed in light. A mist, whose colors were those of a May orchard, expanded to the zenith, throwing an aurora on the

crests of the cliffs. The dark water became milky and the reef tips, emerging in the trough of the sea, threw forth golden flashes, like glances from the eyes of wild beasts. Young girls dressed in white now came out of the cabins and ran, with outstretched hands, towards the tree, which was growing larger. At their touch, the flowers solidified, became real branches of almond and rose bushes, and fell into their arms. When the branches had been gathered, the girls threw them at the feet of the unknown man, who smiled on beholding the spring-like avalanche of perfume and color. Constantina's boat was now well on its way to sea. The swell and the sky were dark with the menace of a storm, but the snowy vessel yonder remained white and luminous, and the tree springing from the ice still shed over the traveler its burden of inexhaustible fertility.

Constantina was in the country, resting on the top of a dune, her bicycle lying on its side on a tuft of grass. The houses of Acharnai were ranged at the left, enveloped in warm mist. The sun had just disappeared behind a line of thin cloud, which suddenly began to glow like a brooch set with brilliant glass beads. In the fields, three children in red jerseys were playing and shouting, so charged with light that they seemed three little flames fallen from the solar hearth.

A stroller bowed to Constantina. She recognized a friend of her parents, Dr. George Patriades, who was the physician at the hospital for the insane. He lived alone on the border of a large estate and in a cottage from which he could see the quieter patients wandering about. Sometimes, when his duties permitted, he traveled about in a cycle car, to forget the delusions of grandeur which had been occupying him. Here, however, he did not succeed. He sat down beside Constantina and talked of his patients. It was evident that he had no other interest save to understand the mental state of each one of his patients.

As he was speaking Constantina saw that it would be well to tell him of her dream. He listened to her, his eyes lowered, and affecting to be absent-minded. He assumed this attitude with healthy people so that they might not be embarrassed with the feeling that they were being

studied. The insane, though, he looked full in the face, to detect their deceptions and oblige them to admit the truth.

"The end, humph, what is that?" he asked suddenly, when Constantina finished her story.

"It is a village in the northern part of the country, where my parents used to take me when I was a child. There was a road bordered by little farms of green, situated on bluish, stony ground. The trunks of the apple trees, in the little enclosures, were painted blue. Every sheep had a blue line painted on its back. There were wheelbarrows full of round cheeses, which rolled along like red balloons or magic apples. It was all like a toy world, a comic paradise, where I forgot the sadness and immensity of the universe."

"I understand," smiled George. "For you, the end signifies happiness. The long voyage in the black ship is your life. To arrive at the end means to reach happiness at last. To arrive elsewhere is to arrive at sadness."

"Perhaps you are right," she admitted.

"And the unknown man? I wonder if he wasn't your husband?"

"He hardly resembled him. He was tall and thin, the very opposite of Philip."

"Oh, we often caricature, in our dreams, personalities which we do not wish to recognize."

"Why should I not wish to recognize Philip?"

George hesitated, and lowered his eyes. "You see, there is the icy ship. You feel that your husband is frigid toward you."

Constantina blushed violently, and George continued, "You wish to approach and move him. But the icy man remained unmoved and insensible."

"But the flowers," said Constantina, breaking off and chewing a bitter weed. "What did the flowers mean?"

"The flowers were a homage of affection, a sort of consolation offered. The dream was one of disappointed affection and tenderness."

Constantina rose to her feet, shunning any further explanations. He supported her to the foot of the dune. She

descended mechanically, like a sick person who has been caused pain by a physical examination and who is afraid that the least jolt will bring back the pain.

She took minute care of her home, following out the domestic ideals suggested to her by the servants. Elisabeth, the cook, now used electrical devices, and Marya now wore a lace-trimmed apron when she waited at table. She was thirty-five years old, suffered from repressed desires, and thought herself an object of male pursuit. When she was returning at twilight on Sunday evenings, she was sometimes rude to strollers who were quite innocent of any evil intention. She had adopted a cat, which she closely watched. The sly animal tried every night to escape from the little, walled courtyard, but the dry, rough hand of Marya always caught the cat in time. She brushed the cat's teeth and hung ornaments at its neck. The cat grew fat, ill tempered, and slept for days at a time curled up in a ball in a quilted basket. The cat would awake suddenly, and dart injured glances at any one who ventured to approach. When placid Elisabeth interceded for the imprisoned cat, Marya said, "She can suffer very well just as I have to."

By the end of the summer Constantina ceased her daily walks and bicycle rides. She formed the habit of lying down for an hour or two in the middle of the afternoon, as if to smother in unconsciousness thoughts which burned too keenly. Her slumber was light and not disturbed by the sounds from outside the house, but it was broken by the slightest domestic irregularity.

Her parents returned from Corfu at the beginning of October. She took tea with them on the day they arrived home. They talked gayly of their strolls about the desert of the dunes, of how they became covered with mud in their walks along the borders of the salty pools, where there were flocks of drowsy wild geese. They told of the September gales, of the sea which threw its huge, gray-green breakers about the island, of the beach, streaked with long ribbons of dry sand, and of the wind, against which one could lean and which it was necessary to conquer and pierce like the ocean swell, for, otherwise, it would sweep you back as it

did the shreds of seaweed, the shell fragments, and the lashing warm rain, driven toward the north.

Here, in the pavilion where they were having tea, in the garden, life seemed suspended. A feeble yet still faithful sun caressed the Javanese hangings and the brown oblongs of the printed sarong which covered the table. At this moment, a year after the close of her past life, and almost to the day, the return of the cold weather brought back to Constantina hours like that when she had first known Philip. She perceived that her parents' talk was designed to prevent her from having sad reflections, for they allowed no anniversary ever to escape their attention. As she felt the tears gathering, she went off to pick a late rose.

From her mother she had inherited a sureness of memory which allowed her to fix and piece together all the events of the past. She was aware that the old lady had, in a drawer, an album full of poetic quotations and that in this album there were recorded dozens of births, marriages and deaths. There were queer names of distant cousins who had died very young, and so long ago that it was inconceivable that living people could remember them. Constantina, who had formerly often explored with her mother this sacred family record, did not dare to consult the album now, for it contained the dates of her betrothal and marriage, which she would have been too much moved to behold. They awoke chords in her. So did other things.

At this period she shut herself away from people. She would forget herself for hours at the window, reading a novel, although she read but little, after all. A single paragraph sufficed to open a dream world to her, whose distant poles were united by a subtle thread of thought. Her fingers sometimes became quite bloodless and insensitive.

Whenever she woke, now, a vague distress overtook her. As in a species of terror, she perceived the return of the familiar, domestic sounds each day and hid her head under the pillows, as if to go back to a less gloomy country from which she had been exiled by the inexorable morning hours. She played tricks with the day, lighted the room well, and stared for long moments.

The ivory elephant, its microscopic size almost lost, halted just at the edge of a marble shelf—the fruits in carved wood—the round, golden-brown mangosteen, the oval and yellowish green doureen, the bark vase encircled by a serpent—these delicate reminders of a sunny world interposed themselves between her and the mechanical passage of the hours. But Marya would come, open the curtains and raise the serge awning and the white light rising from the plain announced the arrival of another day to live through.

George, the doctor, was having tea with her parents when Constantina entered the parlor. She noticed that he treated her with an uneasy gentleness. He sometimes stopped himself before speaking, as if he feared that certain words, of no moment for others, might touch some sore spot in Constantina. George was describing the poverty in the poorer parts of Athens.

"You must have a great deal of liberty," he told Constantina. "You can get a nurse's diploma. You would be very useful as a visiting nurse."

So Constantina was following the nursing courses given at the church school. She learned how to disinfect a wound, to assist a surgeon, to place a dressing. An absurd sense of responsibility oppressed her when she had to roll a bandage about the waxen arm of the manikin. After a few weeks, Menas, one of the nurses, became her friend. Constantina liked her face, which shone with a great, repressed pity, and with a misdirected love for animals. Menas took Constantina to the hospital now and then.

Constantina saw an operation, performed on a child eight months old. The child laughed while the nurses were undressing it, for it thought it was about to be plunged into its warm bath. It lifted its nose curiously toward the chloroform cone and breathed the novel odor with all its might. When it awoke it gave a grimace and began to cry. It was hungry. As Constantina looked at it she was amazed, quite upset with hope and tenderness.

"Look out!" cautioned Menas. "It won't do to love them too much!"

"Why not?"

The nurse shrugged, without replying in words. Next day Constantina learned that the child had died.

She was permitted to rub the little ones' heads, covered with crusts or vermin. The process, seemingly a very simple one, always presented some difficulties. The nurses spoke of them with impatience, making fun of Constantina. She vainly tried to be as gentle as possible, but she could not prevent the children from crying. She had to call the second nurse, a great, brutal woman without much sense, who angrily seized the rebellious heads and vigorously soaped and scrubbed them. The infants ceased crying, laughed, and stretched out their tiny hands to the senseless giantess. Menas noticed Constantina's confusion smilingly. She took her one day to see a woman who was very ill and whose husband, an incapable workman, earned five cents an hour doing chores. The woman earned a little more by dressmaking. The lives of these two people had passed in such poverty that privation was the sole link between them. The sickness which had strengthened this tie in the woman had broken it in the man. Whether because of difficulty in accomplishing an unusual act, or because of inability to imagine his wife's sufferings, he had never come to the hospital at all. The forsaken woman said to Constantina with resigned astonishment, "Why doesn't he come to see me? We have both worked alike and together!"

Herein lay all the tragedy of the world, the lack of love, the scorn of offerings made by many souls. Defeated by death, by natural events, by inattention and neglect, and by the hardening of hearts, unemployed tenderness wears itself out in an exhausting solitude. Menas went to church and prayed to God. But who could say that the God she created for herself was not a substitute for the human figures loved in secret?

Constantina soon ceased to follow the nursing courses at the hospital. She went to see her parents every day and shared for an hour in the family talk. Her father had given up work some years ago and smoked his cigars and read his journals. Her mother read the arriving letters aloud every morning. Little photographs would fall from her letters.

There would be a native husband smiling beneath his white helmet, or there were pictures of lively, bronzed children on the arm of their *babu*, or nurse. Constantina's father sometimes asked her to play the Eolian, and she dutifully slipped in the roll of perforated paper, worked the stops and idly allowed the old man's favorite music to be played.

When the next summer began, her mother received bad news from Smyrna, for her cousin died. The latter was a very obese woman, who had married, twenty-five years before, an officer of the merchant marine who had been rejected for naval service. She lived in a house built during the preceding century. When, against the façade of faded brick, the sleepy face of the cousin appeared behind the bluish panes of the parlor, it seemed as if a phantom were rising from the past to judge and damn the present.

This human larva, though, loved her husband. She had not desired children, fearing that her husband's affection might be transferred to them. However, she did give birth to a poor specimen. It had no spinal cord and died the day after it was born. Six months after marrying, the sailor husband became the lover of a niece who lived outside the city in a gay cottage. Whenever he returned to Greece he stayed two days with his wife, and then pretended to leave for Salonica "on company business." His wife carefully packed fresh linen in his bag, and then he went to seek his mistress among the tulips.

The wife remained unaware of the liaison for fifteen years. When she learned of it, the only revenge she could invent was to live as long as possible in order to prevent her husband from marrying the other woman. On learning further, that she was affected with cancer of the stomach, the poor woman limited herself to liquid diet, hoping to prolong her life.

She had died while her husband was absent on a voyage. Constantina and her mother arrived at Smyrna for the funeral. The odors from the bay filled the whole house and, in the dead woman's room, the odor of her malady was still perceptible. The big and quarrelsome brothers of the absent sailor were in the parlor. Constantina had not seen the dead cousin for years. She had often made fun of her,

of the glass of port which she invariably offered at three o'clock.

Now a great pity affected Constantina suddenly, as she saw the soft cheeks of the dead woman, whose morbid love had been hypocritically swept aside during her life. She could not bear to see how masculine indifference accompanied the poor woman even to her coffin, and burst into sobs before the astonished brothers-in-law. The tears were only for herself. They accomplished nothing, compensated for nothing. They were merely a useless and plaintive sign manifested in a desert by a sad and despised heart.

This year, Constantina accompanied her parents to the island of Corfu. From the sailing vessel she perceived a thin blade of sand lying flat between sea and sky. Far away, at its thin tip, small sandbars shone now and then, like sudden smiles showing pearly teeth. The landscape was colored a light, pearly gray, and the limits between the earth, sea and air were imperceptible. The light played with the low island, running along it, wavering and producing a mirage of lakes in the hollows of the dunes. Constantina accepted the magic pictures. Her objectless love was slowly relaxing. She had been thinking less and less of Philip for some weeks, and had forgotten some of his features.

On the day they arrived, she took a walk with her mother in the fields, where the soil was sandy and covered with a light turf. Sheep bearing red marks ran aside in couples. The old lady spoke of her husband, and was uneasy about his health. He was also preoccupied with something.

"With what?" asked Constantina.

"With you, my child, and with your future."

Constantina thought he was worried about money matters, about the depreciation in Balkan securities which she had heard discussed. But her mother went on to speak of the doctor, George.

"He is a very good man. He has a brotherly affection for you. We have been thinking that you might——"

Constantina placed a kiss on the pink, wrinkled cheek. She was moved at her mother's embarrassment, and was

sorry to destroy the naïve hope so preciously cherished by the old people in their talks together. However, she bravely replied, "No, dear Mother. Neither you nor my father need make any plans like that. I shall never marry again."

When she returned to Athens she did not wish, for several days, to encounter George. She did meet him by chance, however, one September evening at the New Athens restaurant. He had come there to forget the day. A storm which had been hovering about the horizon since noon had irritated the insane patients. The celestial electricity had seemed to increase the delirious state. For hours, George had been obliged to soothe and relieve. He was now resting, with his elbows on a little table, and looking at the warm mists mounting from the fields towards the zenith in pearly, nebulous wreaths.

He saw Constantina descend from her bicycle, offered her a chair and asked about her health. She saw at once that he was quite ignorant of the dream entertained by her parents, but thought that he looked at her with some affection. In sitting down she had placed her filigree purse on the table, and had pushed to the right a saucer that was there. He noticed these movements. She was troubled at the thought that he might try to interpret them. So she sat still, and lifted the cup of black tea with hesitation. This man, with his pale, worn face, who was smiling at her in the greenish twilight, seemed mysteriously laden with all the secret diseases of his time. With him, lies were useless. An insistence in his look made confession inevitable. His urgent invitation was so pressing that in his presence silence itself became a deception.

In Constantina, confidences were mounting, like so many insolent gnomes, from the obscure corners of her consciousness. Her usual reserve and the difficulty of expressing such odd thoughts kept her silent, but she obstinately pushed her cup, the teapot and the sugar bowl toward the left. As she rose, the temptation to speak freely overcame her with an irresistible force and she suddenly found the words to express her impossible confession. "I must go home," she said, with a nervous laugh. "*Young girls should*

not be seen in the streets in the evening!" She did not hear his reply. She pedaled away in the coal dust of an alley, her heart light and relieved as if she had avowed a fault.

Whenever she went to see her parents she passed in front of an antique shop, which was near her house. She mechanically examined the window, full of copper snuffers, candlesticks, filigree curling irons, silver spoons, boxes, and Chinese cups and saucers. She one day noticed a little picture by some unknown painter of the sixteenth century, representing a young woman seated at her window looking out on a river. One could see the background of the room, the bed and its sheets, and a tabouret bearing a glass vase in which was fading a bunch of the dune thistles. In the lower part of the canvas, a wall of dark pink bricks plunged into the water of the river, which was still and without reflections. The young woman was not looking at the river. She was looking straight ahead, as if she were a prisoner and, by a device introduced by the artist, her field of vision was made evident.

The antiquarian, thinking to increase the value of this masterpiece, had dubbed it "The Virgin at the River." The artist, though, evidently had not the slightest religious idea. The gentle face of his model expressed only the homesick meditation felt by one involuntarily placed in confinement, the return upon oneself and final acceptance of a life of stagnation, as, separated from activity by the narrow band of water, she looked on across at the busy world.

Constantina examined the painting with tenderness, mingled with a sort of fear. She seemed to see in the picture, disinterred by chance, a secret sign directed intelligently at her across the centuries in a summons, ironical or consoling, and showing a being who had known her own sufferings. However, the portrait stayed several weeks in the shop window, and was then carried off by some antique lover.

The first sign of Constantina's disorder appeared during the tenth winter following her marriage. She was then about thirty. Her father, who had died a short time before,

lay in that strange Thebes cemetery where the graves are fewer than the staunch old trees. Constantina thought no more about Philip. She had put on flesh. She now resembled one of those happy, respectable women whom she had formerly pitied when she saw them knitting on their verandas. Her summers and winters had continued, uninterrupted by joys or sorrows. To see her, with her smooth hair, and tranquillity below her straight corsage, she seemed so sweetly plunged in happiness and calm that life could not reach her at all. It was several weeks before she realized that she was harboring a malady.

Every evening, after dinner, when she sat peacefully knitting in her parlor, there was something to require her in the dining room. She took a regular place behind the table and pushed the button of the bell summoning the servant. Marya would appear and ask her, in her repressed voice, "If you please, ma'am?"

Constantina sent her to the floor above for a book, or had her replenish the fire in the bedroom, or see that the outside door was fastened. The servant obeyed, her tightened lips showing that she considered the request needless. Then her mistress would return to the parlor and resume her knitting.

She wondered, one evening, why, when there was a button within reach, she should go into the next room to ring. She repeated the unreasonable act next day, nevertheless (Note: This case has been cited by Sigmund Freud, of Vienna). She also reflected on the really needless character of the errands demanded of Marya. What need had she of the book? What need to replenish the fire, which was kept up regularly? Why did she feel that the door was unfastened between ten and eleven o'clock every night?

"I am becoming silly," she thought. "It must be very disagreeable for servants to be employed by an old maid!"

Elisabeth answered the bell one day. She arrived from the kitchen, out of breath and with round eyes. Constantina stared at her and said rapidly with a blush, "Oh, really I didn't want anything. You needn't wait."

When the cook had gone out, Constantina touched the back of a chair, feeling as if emerging from a dream. It

seemed to her that her passage from one room to the other and the calling and dismissal of the servant had been performed without her will. The moment when she had been sitting at her work joined that when she again found herself behind the table and its blue cloth. Another woman had illogically occupied the intervening period. On re-entering her parlor she glanced in a mirror to detect that disquieting woman within her.

"I don't want to be caught unawares," she thought while finishing dinner next day. "I must oblige myself not to leave my knitting." Just as the cuckoo clock in the ante-chamber had struck eleven, she found that she was thirsty. The teapot was still on the heater, but the tea had somewhat cooled. She sought the hot-water pitcher, which should have been in its place with the other tea things, in a little brass bucket. "Marya must have taken it away," she thought. So she quickly entered the dining room and rang.

"The pitcher is in the parlor," said the maid.

"I am sure it isn't, Marya," said she. But she found the pitcher in the parlor, in its regular place. "Well, I was mistaken," she remarked. "I don't need you, Marya." She heard the brass bucket at her feet, hardly hidden as it was by the velvet window curtain and within it lay the pitcher, tilted behind. Constantina reflected over this illusion which had baffled her. What was this influence that had the force to efface objects from her visual field? Whither was this tendency leading, which caused her to perform every evening an automatic act which was directed neither by her will nor by her reason? What was the personality which, every day, made her its servant?

She was pleased at the lucidity which enabled her to arm herself again this unknown master. Next day she began a watch upon herself, determined to triumph. She awaited the dangerous hour as skeptics in English novels await midnight ghosts in haunted houses. She occupied herself in reading a French book of travels, in which the author described the distress during a night passed without bearers in an African jungle, amid the roaring of the wild beasts. The fear felt by the tranquil writer imparted

itself to her, little by little, as she read. The hangings and shadows behind her shed upon her the same terrors which the African forest had shed that distant night on the author. She expected a catastrophe as swift and sudden as the leap of a tiger from the woods. If she were to remain in her chair, a nameless, inevitable horror would surely fall upon her. She laid down the book and closed her eyes.

In the silence of the frosty night, a low sound of falling sleet was heard. A few drops of boiling water fell crackling into the fire. Three little clouds of steam, carrying aloft a few fine ashes, mounted from the brass bucket.

Constantina grasped her throat. She saw a form materializing against the velvet curtain. She rose quickly and ran into the dining room, where she rang madly as if for aid. When Marya appeared she did not know what to say, for she grasped the fact that her internal enemy had once more artfully got the better of her. Those terrors which she had felt were only a trick to entice her into the dining room and make her ring uselessly as always.

Since she could not avoid this mysterious domination, she would at least try to justify it in the eyes of Marya. Whenever she was dining after that she sought some pretext which she could employ three hours later. However, the servant was not duped whether Constantina pretended an urgent letter to mail, some article missing from the closet, or a tablet of aspirin to get for her. She observed her mistress with sad distress and whenever Constantina entered the kitchen, the naïve Elisabeth trembled and manifested nervous fear.

Constantina went to Thebes. Her mother had often begged her to live near. Except at the time of her father's death, Constantina had not once passed a night beneath her family roof. On this particular evening, though, she hesitated to return to the town, perhaps because she did not want to be alone. Besides, the snow had been falling all day. The tramcars, smelling like wet wool, were grinding along over the pebbles. In the streets, she would be jostled by the urchins, who would be dancing on one foot and amusing themselves. Constantina allowed herself to be

persuaded that she could not well return, and her old mother, with the excitement caused by inward joy, had the room prepared which Constantina used to occupy when she was a girl.

"This house is too big for me now," sighed her mother, as she watched the servant putting sheets on the bed, "and yours is too big, also."

But Constantina, with an astonishing hardness, smothered once more her mother's dream. "I shall not leave my house," said she.

"Why, my child?"

"Because I am very comfortable there." She did not add that she was aware of an obscure task, which could not be fulfilled except at her own house. She could not betray the strange duty which riveted her to her own damp walls. She was careful not to tell her mother about the insistent impulse which troubled her. She curiously awaited the arrival of the dangerous hour.

After dinner, George Patriades came. He was paler and older. His glance was almost suspiciously sharp, but his smile had sometimes the delight which is imparted by knowledge. He gayly told stories about the asylum, when Constantina suddenly noticed that the clock was pointing to eleven o'clock. She had felt no temptation whatever to go into the dining room and ring for old Suzanne. Her enemy did not appear that evening. She attributed her victory to the presence of George, and felt a desire to confide in him. While her mother was drowsing by the lamp, she got George to the fireplace and talked to him calmly about the incomprehensible habit she was a slave to.

"What do you think of it? It's an insane sort of old maid's whim, I suppose?"

George laughed with her, but she knew he was observing her, and studying the inflections of her voice and her choice of words. "Why do you do that?" he asked suddenly.

"I don't know in the least. I am asking you to tell me why."

"We'll talk it over. I'll come and dine with you tomorrow evening."

Constantina felt paralyzed at the idea of having George

to dinner. No man had ever been at her table since Philip had left her. But she was ashamed of her timidity, so she hastily agreed. "Very well. It's settled. I'll expect you at six."

He rose to say good-night. Since the old lady had fallen asleep, he passed into the vestibule on tiptoe. Constantina, who had followed him, mechanically put on her furs, but he stopped her. "What! You're not going out."

"Yes," she replied, blushing. "I will go with you as far as the mail box."

The snow had ceased to fall. Her walk was so pleasant that, after taking leave of the doctor, she could not decide to return to the house, and went past it. When she reached the tramway station, a vision suddenly entered her mind and impelled her onward. She had been accustomed, for some time, to waking dreams interposed between her and the real world. This time she felt that Philip had come back after his ten years' absence. Since the coachman, an old man whom she knew well, was too weak to unload Philip's trunk, Philip himself carried it laughingly into the vestibule. He relieved her of thick, gray furs, which Marya removed with admiration. They were left alone before the fire. Philip slipped his arm around her waist and caressed her hair.

Next day during dinner George avoided speaking of Constantina's impulse, but about ten o'clock, as they were talking in the parlor, he said suddenly, "Show me just how you act." Constantina repeated her usual performance, telling Marya to bring in some egg-nog.

"Do you always take the same place behind the table," asked George.

"Yes, always."

"And does Marya always enter by the same door?"

"Yes."

"What is this?" and he indicated a dark stain in the middle of the blue velvet table cover.

"Oil I spilled there."

"Long ago?"

"About two months ago."

"Do you remember how the accident happened?"

"Yes, I was at my embroidery when, I don't know why, it seemed to me that the oil bottle was not very clean. Marya sometimes neglects the glass and silver. I went to get it from the sideboard and started to clean it with an old glove. I made a false movement and spilled the oil."

"This is singular," said George. "You place yourself in such a way that Marya is obliged to notice the oil spot when she comes in. It is as if you wished her to know that it was there."

Constantina lapsed into silence. She had a sudden feeling of inexplicable distress and begged George to approach.

"Wait a moment," said he. "The oil spot has surely something to do with your impulse. Doesn't it awake some memory, some association of ideas? In dreams, you know, a table and its cloth often means a bed and its sheets."

Constantina looked at the doctor as if she were seeing him for the first time and stifled an "oh" of surprise.

"Come now," he said, taking her by the arm, "I am sure you have something to tell me."

She buried herself in a leather chair, before the parlor fireplace. Marya brought in the egg-nog. The hot-water pitcher sang merrily. George put out the big lamp and the only glows remaining were those of a little lamp, veiled by a brown paper shade. Constantina murmured, "I have just made a connection which is very strange and which would surely help you to understand me, but I don't see how I can speak of it."

"Why not?"

"It is too intimate."

"George placed his hand on Constantina's forehead for a moment and took a place close beside her. "Oh, you will speak out," he said tranquilly, "I am sure you want to."

"Yes, I do," she admitted. She looked sidewise at his face, immobile with attention and restored to youth by his ardent intelligence.

"I will try," she said, leaning back in her chair. Her body yielded as if clasped by strong hands and she covered her eyes with her hands.

"It goes back to the first night I ever passed in this house, to my wedding night, in fact. My room is just

above the dining room. My husband's room was above the parlor. But Philip—you must know that Philip—no, I can't go on."

"I will help you," said George. "You mean that Philip was not wholly normal. I have known that for some time, my dear child. You told me so yourself one day without knowing it. The dream of the ship on the ice."

Constantina thanked him with a timid look and continued as if relieved of the worst part of the story. "He came and went from his room to mine. He got into my bed, clasped me to him, then suddenly left me, as if he were angry. About two in the morning, he said he was unwell, and was sick with pains in his stomach, probably due to something he had eaten for dinner. I didn't much believe in his distress, but I got up and prepared some hot tea. I thought he was paralyzed by my awkwardness or lack of good will. But, if I had not been pained to see him so distressed, I would have willingly accepted his embraces and his tenderness. I wanted to console him, to make him understand that there was really no reason why he should be so worried. I remained silent, though, for fear of making him worse. I was happy in his arms, and ended by going to sleep. At daylight he said to me, looking at me with fixed eyes, which were full of tears, 'I am ashamed because of the maid.' I did not understand, and he said, with a hatred of himself which I can never forget, 'She will see there is no blood on the linen, and will think I am not a man.' And then he rose, roughly opened the bed clothing, went and got a bottle of red ink from his desk, and poured ink on the sheets. I don't know how I can tell you these horrible things. It seems as if we were both traitors to Philip."

"That is quite enough," said George. "You have told me everything, and I believe I fully understand. How different souls are! Some keep their secrets for months, while you have told me yours almost immediately. Your secret is more singular than you can imagine. Do you know what you are doing, when you thus go and come from one room to the other? You are repeating the tragedy of your wedding night! Yes, you pass from the

parlor into the dining room, just as your husband passed from his room into yours. The table represents the nuptial bed, the tablecloth the ink-stained sheet. You received your first impulse on the day when you spilled the oil. And that wasn't an accident. I believe very little in accidents. You were reproducing, without knowing it, the movement with which Philip poured out the ink."

Constantina crouched between the arm and back of her big chair. Her very flesh seemed to protest against this violation of her consciousness. George took her hand and continued, "Every impulse has an object which is the accomplishment of an unconfessed desire. Your profound object has been to deny Philip's condition. You only call in Marya to show her the oil spot. By making her look at the stained tablecloth, you protect Philip from the suspicion concerning him."

Constantina agreed with a look, too much moved to speak further. "There are acts," continued George, "which are like dreams. They fulfill in the present the desires of the past. Your act, though ten years too late, realizes your former desire that Philip should be a real man and like other men. During all this long time, you have only delayed to prepare the imaginary satisfaction which the appearance of the servant causes you. I pity these observers of the mind who refuse to descend to the depths where the finest treasures lie hidden! I have observed your life. I have known that you have never released yourself from your marriage vows for a single hour. I knew that you had turned your back on the world to prevent any temptation from destroying your memories, but I did not know that your love was at work to suppress the crime committed against it. You have gone much farther than forgiveness or fidelity! Your tenderness has constructed a delicate and powerful lie!"

Constantina began to cry. For some time George explained her past. She answered his questions readily, eager to explain everything. And he showed her the cause of her husband's avarice, which she had never understood. "In Philip's mind," said he, "the money must have been a substitute for love. He wanted to deprive you of love, not

of money, or, whenever he so desired, to overwhelm you with it."

When Constantina rose to say good-night to George, she felt herself intimately transformed, as by a mysterious visitation of the truth.

Memories whirled about in her like waves bringing from strange abysses a multitude of precious pearly shells composed of her early sensations. Constantina returned from these plunges into her own depths calm and broken, feeling, however, that an indistinct explanation had been made of the enigmas of which she was ignorant. The agitation of her evenings had disappeared. Like a stranger, she thought of that woman who had been obliged, by an absurd obsession, and only last week, to perform utterly illogical acts.

That night she dreamed that she was in a room of the house of her parents at Thebes. Her mother was still young and looked as Constantina had known her during early childhood. She herself was ten years younger as well. The hearts of both women were very happy, for they were about to start on a search for Philip. The atmosphere was soft and warm and the steamy vapor brought with it an odor of starch and moist linen. Constantina was giving careful and loving attention to the details of her wedding dress, which she was freshly ironing. But she kept encountering a troublesome false fold which made a wrinkle in the skirt. Now and then a bit of the fabric would escape the flatiron, and the girl, with unwearied arms, and happy tears in her eyes, would bend over the symbolical whiteness of the gown and kept ironing, ironing, ironing.

YOUTHFUL ATHENEUM DAYS

By LODE BAEKELMANS

I

IT was a delightfully warm September's evening and the young men were lying about on the Oosterweelschen dyke.

They were tired of playing and walking about and were glad just to look idly at the ocean and the sky.

The sun seemed to scatter shimmering scales on the incoming tide. The sky was of a deep blue hue and the blades of sea grass growing along the dyke were green. A steamer, whistling and grumbling to itself, belched forth a column of thick, dark smoke.

"I am going to take to the high seas when the proper time comes," declared a hair-lipped youth.

He was gravely sucking away on a long, dark brown cigar, spitting the juice out through his firmly pressed lips onto a rock at the foot of the dyke.

"I don't want to have anything to do with the sea," sighed a second youth carelessly rooting up a few blades of grass, "but, nevertheless, I don't want to become a barber."

"And when Marc returns from the long voyage," thought a thin-looking young man, "we will all go and fetch him."

"As for me," stated a red-headed youngster, "I am going to go back to live with my mother in the Walloon district. She will be made very happy."

"What we really should do is to form some society together," exclaimed a cheerful young man in the group.

"Indeed we should," seconded Marc, the sailor.

"And what is it that we would do in this society?" demanded the thin young man.

"Produce plays," suggested the one who didn't want to become a barber.

"Nothing of the sort," interrupted the bright youth.

"Sing?"

"And after that learn how to play the banjo?"

"What foolishness!"

"Start a savings bank?" chimed in the Walloon.

"Certainly not!"

"Defend the noble cause of learning," the frail young William suggested enthusiastically.

"That's a good idea," admitted the spirited youth, "we will become school teachers ourselves."

"And we can all gather together and go down to meet Marc when he returns from his ocean voyage," resumed the thin young man.

"That would be lots of fun."

"Come then, let us elect the Board of Directors."

"We will make the Walloon our president," decided the witty youth, "William will be the secretary and I the treasurer."

"Yes, but . . ." some one else protested.

"That's just the way we will arrange things," the sailor chimed in appropriately. "I will be made the vice-president and Scherpe will be the counselor. . . . We will exact a fee of two sous per month to take effect from today on!"

"But I have no sous," confessed the treasurer.

"That's all right," said the future sailor. "I'll lend you two sous until Sunday."

"Approved!" concluded the president. "William will draw up the terms; but a society must have a name."

"The Jolly Knaves," suggested Scherpe.

"No," declared the president.

"The Young Crusaders . . ."

"Young, but courageous!"

"The Young 'Klauwaerts!'"

"The Luminous Torch," proposed William.

"An excellent title, indeed," conceded the president. "It is for the noble cause of furthering enlightenment and learning."

"Let it be that then—'The Luminous Torch,'" consented the gay young man. "And now every one must contribute two sous. Furthermore, all our classmates are

obliged to become members except Piet, who failed to pass in his examinations! No diploma—no membership!”

“This rule must appear in the by-laws,” demanded the future sailor.

“And what are we going to do with this money?” asked the youth who did not want to become a barber.

“The directors will determine as to that,” replied the treasurer. “Pay up before doing anything else. . . .”

“Yes, but . . .” hesitated this comrade looking tenderly at his large copper piece.

“Pay up or you can’t vote,” warned the president.

“This too must be inserted in the by-laws,” declared the sailor spitting his tobacco juice against the rock at the foot of the dyke. “Treasurer—take down the names of those who have contributed.”

“Most assuredly,” muttered the youth who so disliked parting with his money.

“There is also a society in my home town,” said the president, “and once a year it holds some sort of an entertainment.”

“We will be able to do that too, later on, after I have become a pilot,” said the sailor.

“And I . . . a school teacher . . .”

“And I . . . a blacksmith . . .”

“I will become a letter carrier in my home village,” stated the Walloon, “and a postman is obliged to walk all about the town under the sun and through the snow. In the summer time people treat him to beer and in the winter the snow is as high as the houses.”

“Come now, president! . . .”

“You have never been in the Walloon district and you can’t say that I lie. The wild boars sometimes come into the village and even into the houses when the doors happen to be open.”

“And aren’t the people afraid?”

“Nobody is fearsome in our village. Every one has a shot gun and they know how to shoot. Pif! Paf! Poof!—and the boars scurry away or else drop dead.”

“Do you eat these animals?”

“Of course. Boar meat is delicious.”

"Well, my mother would not be willing to prepare such hog meat," exclaimed the thin youth disdainfully.

"As for me," laughingly exclaimed the sailor, "I will learn to relish other creatures than this! Very frequently when at sea one is only furnished with biscuits and salted meat for days at a time. But they give me high boots and a sailor's oilskin coat."

"And I received a closet full of clothes and underwear," said the youthful humorist, "together with all the effects I require for normal school. This appears in the printed formula."

"We should buy some society pins for the directors of our club," added Piet.

As this serious youth was not to receive anything he wished to change the trend of the conversation.

"Something that can be worn in the buttonhole!"

"Members will receive a button engraved with the letters 'L.T.'—the Luminous Torch."

"In addition the president will have one with two gold bars," declared the sailor. "This is customary. I will have one with a gold and silver bar, the secretary will have two bars in silver and the treasurer only one. As for the counselor—it is customary for him to have none at all!"

"I protest," exclaimed the counselor.

"We will discuss that question at our next meeting," advised the president. "We will take a vote; it's customary. And now let us return to the house. . . ."

They motioned to a small group of comrades who had been excluded from their reunion and who had sent up a kite not far away from them. The kite was soon drawn in and, after a few delays, the group returned homeward along the dyke, passing alongside of the harbor in order to gain the center of the town. Marc did his best to encourage them all to sing, but his efforts were unsuccessful.

Finally Marc began singing all by himself:

Waar Maas en Schelde vloeien
De Noordzee bruist en stormt;
Waar vrede en kunsten bloeien
De Vrijheid mannen vormt. . . .

William was looking attentively at the spire of Notre Dame and the masts of all the boats. He listened to all the sounds coming from the harbor while he sauntered slowly along behind his companions, dreaming of all the things the future might hold in store for him.

The school year closed with the awarding of diplomas in the main reception hall, the "Symphony Auditorium."

The boys and girls from the primary class sang the chorus of such songs as: "De Wereld in" and the "Brabanconne." A gentleman in ceremonial dress announced the list of prize winners and the Burgomaster Jan van Ryswyck, delivered a fine address to the parents and their children. The children of the townspeople chanted an impressive eulogy in honor of the young student—the son of very poor parents—who, with his studious nature, was making a name for himself in society through his own efforts and perseverance. Indeed, are poets and scientists not the flowers fed by the working classes?

Before very long the holidays were over and the young men began preparing for the future. Most of them began learning some trade. A few of them entered normal school, while Marcel was to regain his native Walloon village. William began following the special lecture courses.

But before the class separated the young men had arranged a little excursion. The club had gathered near the central warehouses before separating and the vice-president, carefully filling his pipe, said to them:

"My friends, we must determine as to our next meeting."

"Where shall the meeting place be?" asked the president.

"Let us set it for Sunday at eleven o'clock in front of the band stand in the park," suggested Marc.

"And what if it should rain?" asked the witty youth.

"If it rains," said the sailor, who was always prompt with some suggestion, "if it rains we will gather at the Stock Exchange."

"That's it!"

On Sunday it was raining. Only three members and the directors showed up for the meeting, which was held in an obscure corner of the Exchange.

"If it continues like this I won't remain a member," threatened the thin young man.

"We will hold another meeting next Sunday," promised the president, "and it will be a bona-fide one. . . ."

Marcel was very proud of his gold bars and the vice-president—very importantly blowing thick clouds of smoke into the air—fixed his entire attention on his buttonhole where glittered his gold and silver bar.

The following week the sun was shining brightly, but only four of the members showed up. The president had left for his natal village and he had asked William to present his resignation as leader of the struggle to further the cause of learning. At the same time he contributed three sous to the treasury fund. The vice-president had offered no explanation at all and the young comrades only learned by chance that Marc had been engaged as steward boy aboard the *Waesland*.

The four faithful members then decided to hold another meeting in order to fill the vacant positions.

But before long the society held no further meetings at all and no one was on hand to greet Marc when he returned from his first cruise.

II

William was walking along by his father's side towards the lecture hall. His father was a stoic man, calm and submissive before the lessons afforded by life.

"And now," said his father, "you must make every effort you can. You must study hard in order that you may do better than your father has done. . . ."

"But isn't that quite sufficient?" exclaimed William candidly, for he adored his father.

"Certainly not, William. I am not a cultivated man and I do not know how to speak French . . . I was not fortunate enough to go to school long enough for that. . . ."

"I will do the best I possibly can," exclaimed William in all good faith.

He was carelessly looking at the sparrows flying up into the trees as they advanced. They were walking along the

pavement watching the leaves stirring in the trees overhead.

"Will you buy me a cap, Father?"

"We will see about it."

The conference hall bell began ringing loudly. A lame attendant conducted them along the corridor to the director's study where they sat down on the edge of a chair. The youth whispered to his father:

"What a long time to wait . . ."

But the knob was turned before his father could reply and a small man appeared in the opening of the door.

"Come in."

A real "Tom Thumb," thought William to himself.

"Sir, I have come to enroll my son, William," said his father to the head master.

"Very good!"

The little man seemed to be quite impatient and but slightly disposed to let the boy's father open his heart to him.

"He wishes to be able to continue his studies," resumed the father.

"What is his full name?"

"William Janssens."

"Place of birth?"

"Antwerp," stated William.

"Date?"

"March 30, 1878."

"He has his French diploma," the father endeavored to add, "but he is desirous of learning French even better."

The features of this little "Tom Thumb" softened a trifle.

"Has he come from the normal school?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Very good! It will be necessary for him to take an examination in order to enter the sixth grade. He is not to take up Latin, is he? No doubt he will follow a business course?"

"Yes, Sir," answered the father.

"You must learn how to speak French fluently, my young man. You speak Flemish well enough."

When they were outside the building and walking along once more under the trees there was a sort of cloud hanging over William's features. Never will he be able to forget the way they greeted him at the lecture hall. He did not know exactly why, but he felt that he had been humiliated. His diploma seemed to have lost all importance and this man had treated his father most distantly.

"But, why is it that the director does not know any Flemish?" he asked his father.

"Because he is a Walloon," the latter answered. "They have no need to!"

"But . . ."

"You see now how very necessary it is to learn French?"

"At Antwerp I think one must know how to speak Flemish," protested William.

"You won't even be able to become a customs official with just Flemish," declared his father.

"It's quite unfair," insisted William doggedly.

"There is a great deal for you to learn yet," stated his father wisely.

When, a week later, William took his place on the bench in the lecture hall and found himself surrounded by a group of young men all his courage seemed to abandon him. Finally he had the courage to address a man who was in charge at the entrance to the corridor. The man had a grizzly beard and was looking at him attentively through his spectacles.

"What did you say?" asked the man.

"*Waar is mijn klas?*"¹ asked William timidly.

"I don't understand what you say," said the guardian disdainfully. "Express yourself in French."

William felt far more like crying than laughing. He did not feel at all sure of himself in this hall in the midst of all these strange boys.

"What are you looking for!" demanded a lanky youth.

"My class room. . . . The sixth B."

"Come along with me. . . . I am also from the sixth B. . . . You must never ask anything of an attendant in

¹ Where is my class?

Flemish. . . . He is Leopold III and he understands Flemish perfectly, only he doesn't want to speak to the students in that language."

"Why not?"

"It's not the custom," explained the lanky youth. "They can all speak French here. But all the boys speak Flemish except the posers in the Walloon and Latin sections."

A week later William was familiar with all the teachers, their mannerisms and their nicknames. The Flemish teacher was called the "Death Head"; the history teacher "Skinny"; the German teacher "Roundy"; and the French "Triplets." Almost all the boys were former students of the French district school. Others were from private schools or had been tutored. A couple of wild youths, who were, for the time being, the heroes of the class, were wearing out their trouser seats for the second term in this same grade. Most of the boys wore a cap embroidered with the initials A.R.¹ in gold letters. One student in the Latin class had a cap with the initials K.A.². William was impressed by this difference and he sought the explanation. The lanky youth knew the answer.

"He's Flemish," said he. "Royal Atheneum means Koninklijk Athenaeum."

William didn't say anything, but he insisted upon having a cap when he returned home.

"Go and buy one," his mother finally exclaimed.

When he went to the shop to buy it he asked to have one with the initials K.A.

"We have none," said the merchant. "There is no demand for them. It's not customary."

"I want a cap with the initials K.A." insisted William.

"We can have one made for you," consented the dealer, "but I warn you again that it is not the fashion and it will cost you a franc extra."

"That's all right."

"And you will have to wait a whole week for it!"

William finally received the cap, but he did not explain at home that it was more expensive than the others. One

¹ Royal Atheneum.

² Koninklijk Athenaeum.

of the boys of the neighborhood who attended the same school with him knew about the price and considered it stupid to willingly do differently from the great majority of the students.

"I am Flemish," William would explain.

"But we are all Flemish," admitted the practical young man.

William, at this time, was a pale, slender youth with blue eyes looking forth from a round face. He was not interested in the frivolous games of his companions. He was not very robust and it pleased him more to look on and merely join in the conversations. He literally devoured all the books he could lay his hands on. He lived in a world of imagination and this world of his was filled with strange, romantic figures and personages taken from the novels he read, such as: "The Three Musketeers," works by Conscience, Sleckx, the Snieders brothers and "Poor Flanders," by Styns. At night in the study room he was placed alongside of a scholar from a superior grade. He would quickly finish his lessons and would then borrow a copy of the "Camera Obscura" from the older scholar. He would be able to lose himself in his reading without attracting the attention of the superior on duty. If the latter should happen to pass by he would skillfully slide a copy book over the defended fruit. His companions often made fun of the professors, but William found no pleasure in annoying them. He always listened very attentively and his love for reading led him to devour his history book as if it were a most captivating novel, while his comrades, in the meantime, created disorder in the class room of "Skinny," the history teacher.

The gymnasium professor was especially ill-treated by the students. He did not understand a single word of Flemish and the pupils took advantage of this fact to say mean things about him. The professor did not hesitate to mete out punishment, and detentions fairly rained during the period, but before it was time to leave he would wipe them all out. William pitied this man, who eventually fell ill during the middle of the school year and failed to reappear.

"We must have killed him," exclaimed one of the students.

William quickly lost his early enthusiasm and only retained the things his mind was able to grasp without effort. The spirit of comradeship he had found in the primary school did not exist here. After each period the professor was changed and the students had little sympathy for their teachers.

It was the period for the holding of examinations before the beginning of the new year. The town was covered over by deep snow and along the avenues, beneath the trees which were reflected in the shiny pavements covered with ice slides, the boys and girls would amuse themselves until late at night. From the sky the moon poured its silvery light over all. Never exhausted, the children would slide along the roads which were like polished mirrors, and the snow-balls were thrown about with great enthusiasm. William forgot all about his examination and only dreamt each night about the joy given to him each day of the week by all these white flakes about him. It was at this time that he had made a friend of a little boy whose father, a Swedish tailor, worked for the sailors. One day he accompanied his little friend to the Swedish church, where he saw a magic lantern and Biblical parchments brought in on a cloth and where he listened attentively to the melodious voice of the organ. After this when he would find himself in the neighborhood and would overhear the sound of the organ he would slip quietly into the temple of worship.

The result of the first examinations was not brilliant. He only succeeded in getting a good mark in history and Flemish. A surprise awaited him during the second trimester. Dolf Goris, one of the students, handed him a little paper entitled, *The School Gazette*, which was printed by the Latin class scholar who had the K.A. written on his cap. The paper was printed to uphold the cause of "Law and Justice." The following week when he sought to purchase a copy of the paper Dolf explained to him that the principal had suspended its publication. The principal had said that it was not fitting for the students to print newspapers or to concern themselves with politics.

"But I, too, edit a paper," Dolf confided to him. "It is written in my own hand, but all the school writers collaborate."

"I would like to buy it," said William.

"I even write poetry," admitted Dolf.

"Poetry?"

"Yes—poems to my sweetheart."

"Naturally," admitted William.

But William was utterly astounded. So Dolf had a sweetheart and wrote poetry! This fact elevated him in William's esteem. A few days after this he received a copy of the little paper which was entitled "North and South." It was written on four pages from a school notebook. Dolf had a very fine penmanship and the title was printed in red and black characters. The issue began with "I love my Flemish mother-land" and "The Lion of Flanders." For the first time in his life William read:

"They will never tame the proud Lion of Flanders
For as long as this lion is healthy and well just so long will
he show his teeth."

He had heard this song bellowed during election time by the Catholics as a political song, while he and his school comrades had shouted on these same occasions the few words he knew of the "Knaves' Song."

Zij brullen Leeuw van Vlaanderen
en huilen tegen ons
Zij die den Leeuw doen kruipen,
doen kruipen voor Bourbons . . .

"Are you a religious enthusiast?" said William to the poet.

"Not at all," replied Dolf, "although I went to the Catholic school. Why do you ask?"

"Because you have translated the 'Lion of Flanders.'"

"It is the song of all Flemish people."

"But what are you then?" insisted William.

"I belong to the Flemish Party?"

"But what is the Flemish Party?"

"Members of this Party uphold the rights of the Flemish race. The Flemish people have no rights whatever. Our wrongs must be wiped out . . ."

"The prefect and the guardians should, therefore, understand Flemish?" offered William.

"This must be!"

"And what of the customs men?"

"They too . . . of course. A Flemish man must feel that he is at home in Flanders as well as in the Walloon districts."

"Good. I, too, am of the Flemish Party then."

"There are about six of us at the Atheneum," admitted Dolf. "The struggle is a severe one. I had thought as much from your cap. . . . The men with K. A. on their caps are the genuine ones. . . . Do you do any writing too?"

"Nothing but prose," William humbly confessed.

"That, too, has its good points," said Dolf encouragingly.

"North and South" ceased to appear after the fourth issue. Dolf had had enough of it, or else lacked sufficient copy. In addition, the time for examinations was approaching and he found himself obliged to study very hard.

"A gazette written out in longhand is no good at all," he explained in order to excuse himself. "However, I am going to save my money so I will be able to have my paper printed."

III

William passed on into the fifth class and was known as a supporter of the Flemish Party. He knew the "Lion of Flanders" by heart and he devoured a great many books. Aside from this he was quite a normal scholar. He was not in favor of very hard work. A most pleasing lad had been placed alongside of him on the bench. Jean Delvigne was the name of this timid, quiet youth who was following the same course as he at the Academy. It was thanks to a fly which had been annoying them for some time and which Jean had caught and drowned in their ink-well that their friendship had been established. It

had been an interesting and exciting game for him during the tiresome lesson, but William had been rewarded by a detention of two hours after school.

"But it is still possible I will be able to get away," William said.

"Why don't you come then and meet me at my house?"

He went to call on his friend and was ushered into his little study room. There was a violin hanging up on the wall and also some sketches in black and white.

"I want to become an artist. . . ."

"Can you play the violin?" William demanded.

"Not very well . . . I only play for my own satisfaction."

"Well, then, please play a piece for me," begged William.

Jean improvised something and, long after the violin had been hung up on the wall again, William was still lost in his dreams.

"Come along, let's leave. . . ."

"I want to become a writer. . . ."

"I note down all my impressions in my notebook," said Jean. "I have only one real friend and he is to become a sculptor."

Jean's greatest veneration was for Rubens. The two young men were seated on a bench in the main hall of the Museum, lost in admiration. Prior to this William had never before penetrated into this building. He felt that he was far superior to the other students and his attention was especially aroused by the works of Breughel and Verhaert. Breughel impressed him by his strange realism, and Verhaert with his strange colors of brown and green offered him a familiar aspect of the old port.

The shy young man was quite at home here and he visited one hall after the other until the time came for closing.

"And now we will go to the place I love the best."

William followed his friend until they reached the shore. There they found some boats anchored near the locks giving into the south harbor. They were waiting for the tide to come in enough to permit them to enter. The river was absolutely calm and motionless. Beyond the

docks and the opposite shore the green hue of the prairies and the distant dyke mingled with the gray skies and the smoke from the factory chimneys. From the distance came the various sounds of activity in the port.

"This is where I come to watch the sunsets every Tuesday and Thursday. This is where I forget all about school and the professors."

"I hardly ever think about them," confessed William.

From then on the two comrades had a mutual interest. They possessed a secret which seemed to elevate them above the others in their group. William went to the Museum more than once after that during the remainder of the same school year. When Jean did not accompany him he would stop in front of the picture which appealed to him the most. On Sunday he was able to go to the "Exposition" with some friend or with his parents. He enjoyed himself more in the "old Antwerp" district than in the awe-inspiring halls where the products of the entire world were exhibited. In the "Old Antwerp" district there was singing and festivities reminiscent of former days. It was a picturesque reconstruction of the past, where one found lace-like façades of houses, narrow, winding little side-streets, a large open square with the town hall and municipal buildings and also a little rivulet. Small brass lamps were burning inside the somber dwellings and in front of a statue of the Virgin was a collection of curiously costumed little girls and men wearing white collars and broad, baggy trousers. Inside the taverns boards were spread across wooden stands to form long tables and the visitors would eat and drink seated on small stools, sipping their beverages from small stone jugs. In the evening they would hold a grand "retreat," after which the visitors were obliged to depart.

During his childhood, William had seen an historic procession, portraying the Middle Ages, pass by in the streets. The memory of this procession came back to him when he visited this section of old Antwerp and listened to the old, traditional songs which linked the aged inhabitants to their distant past.

At the Atheneum the days passed by—each one similar

to the other. By this time William had learned how to take care of himself and had detected the failings of most of his professors. The French teacher commanded respect. He was a repulsive looking man with his features spotted with red blotches, but the boys had not been able to find a suitable nickname for him. The quick-witted Walloon would always take his part and, although speaking French very poorly, he pointed out the origin of the Flemish word taken from the French term "sailor." The teacher of physics was a perfect brute, having been an artillery instructor in the army. This teacher spoke exceedingly fast, employing French expressions. Seldom were his explanations understood by the students. The best scholars in his class resorted to learning their geometry lesson by heart, while the others—the majority—failed to show the slightest interest. They merely copied their work and wasted their time during these periods in which they understood nothing—neither the terms nor the explanations. William, who had been a very good student in the primary school, realized thoroughly that he would be merely wasting his time and would profit in no way from these lessons which he did not understand.

"This is one of our grievances," said Dolf; "just calculate the loss of time the Walloons are not subjected to. They understand everything that is taught to them and receive the highest awards in the competitive examinations."

"And when is your new paper to be issued?"

"I think it will appear next week," said Dolf. "I have found two boys in my class who are willing to risk the money. *The Fly* will be the title of the new publication. Haven't you any article to submit?"

"I'll prepare something," William promised in all seriousness.

He wrote an article and Dolf saw to it that it appeared in the first issue. *The Fly* took flight—but it was soon captured by the head-master. The editors were severely reprimanded and the two boys who had risked their money in the affair saw their money confiscated. But Dolf did not lose courage. He purchased a small bottle of purple

ink, a small zinc basin, along with the necessary paste. He filled in another form page and printed some twelve copies of it on his own press. "Where there's a Will, there's a Way" was the title of the new publication of which he sold a few copies to some of his most enthusiastic admirers.

But the flame of ambition did not burn very long! One fine Monday Dolf showed up without any copies. After his lesson in "Roundy's" class, during which the students had amused themselves in releasing May-bugs, William sought to learn the reason for this.

"I've had enough of working for a restricted public," said Dolf. "I am going to contribute to the *Flemish Free Press*. One of my poems has been accepted. . . . Come and read it over at my house, for I don't want to bring the copy here."

William understood his reason. The copy was liable to fall into dangerous hands, and even some trusted friend might betray him to the superintendent. He considered Dolf as being the "prince" of all his friends and he placed him far above the others in his estimation. His poem had been published!—really published in a weekly magazine alongside of articles by genuine writers.

"And it's only a mere beginning," explained Dolf.

"Naturally it is," responded William spontaneously.

He found the way to leave his home in the evening by pretending that he had forgotten a book at the school. Dolf lived on a curious sort of courtyard quite a distance away in the town. There was a small garden in front of his parents' little home comprised of just a few square feet of earth. Geraniums and mignonette bloomed on the lawn. The little wooden fence was covered with ivy and morning glories. There was also a rustic bench under the trees, which were all in bloom.

It was there that they read Dolf's poem together. The author proudly admired his own poetic inspiration and William was thoroughly enthusiastic.

"I am going to buy it," promised William.

"Yes, we really must support our papers," advised Dolf. William turned around as if he sensed that he was being spied upon. He caught sight of Dolf's father from behind

the flowerpots in the little window upstairs. His eyes were a soft blue and his features were pleasing to look at.

"Interesting, isn't it, William?"

The old man greatly admired his son. He was shaking his head and stroking his short beard with evident satisfaction.

"Dolf is a fine youngster. He's a real poet . . ."

"Yes," William agreed, fully convinced.

The father was a basket maker by trade and he sacrificed himself to assure his son's future. William's father did as much, but he had other ambitions in mind, and poetry did not find favor in his estimation.

Every week after that William would purchase the *Flemish Free Press*. He would read with enthusiastic interest the poems, stories, Flemish opinions and the biographical details concerning well-known Flemish leaders.

He filled the future with his rich imagination, improvising stories and composing little anecdotes. He was fully aware that he did not possess Dolf's keen aptitude and more than once he abandoned all hope in the success of his desires. But his ambition would always return during his moments of greatest discouragement, and during his examinations he would waste his time composing essays of no importance.

When Jean Delvigne heard about this he shook his head and laughed. He, on the other hand, worked conscientiously and unceasingly.

"My friend, we are artists and we don't pay any attention to mathematics."

IV

"Of course not," assented William with conviction.

During the summer holidays William did a great deal of reading. Not a week passed without his visiting Dolf, and he would have lengthy conversations with him about art and literature. Later on he experienced difficulty in remembering what they had discussed, but in all events it was highly interesting. Only on one occasion did he linger in Jean's room listening to the airs played on the violin.

"Superb!"

"My brother is a musician who directs an orchestra aboard one of the transatlantic liners," said Jean. "That's living! Think of sailing all about the world. . . . Here we are far too confined," he said, looking helplessly around the little room.

It was at this time that a new acquaintanceship appeared to exert a great influence on William's development. In the *Free Press* he found regularly some poems by Oscar Soetewey, who was devoted to the Flemish language and was known as a great writer of Flemish ballads.

In the neighborhood where William lived there was a very well-known druggist whose name was also Soetewey. It seemed to William that this man was too fat to have any poetic inspiration. But it was quite possible that his younger brother, who helped in the store, was the real poet! He wanted to satisfy his curiosity and, one day when he had an errand to do for his mother, he slipped a copy of the *Flemish Free Press* into his vest pocket. Soetewey was very likely to notice it and indeed he did, for, as luck would have it, the young man was alone at the counter.

"Do you read the *Free Press*?" asked Soetewey, who knew the youth.

"Naturally," replied William. "And are you familiar with Oscar Soetewey?"

The poet was not unwilling to be appreciated and he forgot all about his work to talk about poets until there were finally some clients to be served.

"Come and talk with me tomorrow afternoon," whispered Soetewey. "I will be here all alone in the shop."

From then on William had a friend outside of his school chums. Oscar was three years older than William and was more experienced and of more advanced development. He had lived in Bruxelles and he told about the struggle of the Flemish Party, which, of all the political parties was the only one that interested itself solely in the cause of the Flemish race and distributed tracts in an effort to elect a deputy to Parliament.

"The Flemish people have nothing to expect from the

politicians," was his opinion, "but rather from such men as Father Reinhard, the Lawyer Josson and the Doctor Banning. . . . One day I attended a meeting of the young Flemish guards in which Buyl criticized Conscience's grandson for not understanding the language of the people, and he spoke so eloquently and with such sincerity that tears came into his eyes. Armed with clubs we would sally forth to distribute propaganda and we would frequently have battles with the French-party supporters. Yes, it is in Bruxelles that the struggle is the fiercest. . . . It is a French stronghold and yet the mass of the people are Flemish . . ."

But Soetewey would become enthusiastic again when he began singing the praise of his native land, West Flanders, his beloved native language and the love of the people for the old Flemish customs. Soetewey would also enthuse over the works of Guido Gezelle, who was not yet generally appreciated. During these quiet afternoons he would take down his old, much used books and begin reading out loud. . . . Then, for the first time, the young man was delighted and overcome with admiration while listening to his comrade who was modestly reading some of Guido Gezelle's poetry. . . .

"We are nothing but scribblers alongside of such things as that," Soetewey would laughingly exclaim while his brown eyes would light up with intense admiration.

"Indeed so," William would sigh.

But this did not prevent his bringing forth, a moment later, his own poems, which he would read out loud, and William would praise the works of his friend with almost as much enthusiasm as he had those of the master poet.

On only one occasion did William find the courage to read a few notes of his own creation and to receive the praise and encouragement offered to him by his older, but very affectionate, friend.

Soetewey was also responsible for William having purchased a pipe and having learned how to smoke. He found it an exceedingly agreeable thing to smoke his pipe with his friend and send up thick clouds of smoke! It heightened his importance in his own self-estimation.

V

After the summer holidays William, who had developed in this manner, entered the fourth grade.

He was filled with expectancy.

In the Flemish lesson, he was now able to listen to the lectures delivered by a celebrated writer. When Pol de Mont would enter the classroom, everybody was calm and attentive. His mere presence inspired authority. He had small, very white hands, wore a handsome dark beard, and his hair was black and wavy. His very dark eyes fairly glistened behind the nose glasses he wore. He spoke with surprising facility and was able to break off in the middle of a phrase and then resume and terminate his lecture without sacrificing its interest.

The mother tongue was the key to all the sciences. He who thoroughly understood his native tongue could conquer the world. . . . He who understood perfectly his own language would be able to learn many others. . . . The true Flemish man should direct his gaze to the North as the Walloon should direct his eyes to the South. Holland was a civilized country . . . it was free from people of low and base ideals . . . literature was the dominant characteristic of civilization. . . . In former days Flanders was powerful and rich. . . . It only depends upon those of future generations for our people to become again what they were in the past. . . . Hold in respect the spiritual ideas of other peoples—the English, German and French . . . but hold in special esteem the native land of Flanders. . . .

After the lesson Dolf, Jean and William were fired with intense enthusiasm, and the majority of the students appeared to be completely dominated by what the original professor had said to them.

"That's not a lesson," exclaimed William's desk companion disdainfully . . . "we come here to learn grammar."

William merely shrugged his shoulders. He realized that he had been offered more than a mere hour of grammar study and that he had been given something to elevate his ideals concerning life and his love for the beauties of his native land.

Pol de Mont was able to open the sealed doors of their young souls. He would give way to the inspiration of the moment and scatter his wealth of ideas broadcast among them. He startled them out of their dreams. His class was composed of active, living subjects and all professional obligations were lost to him. He would read to the class such works as: "De kleine Johannes," "Mei," van Gorter, mention the works of Guido Gezelle, of Helene Swarth, Willem Kloos, and taught them to appreciate "De dood van mijn poes," "Het Stierengevecht" and Van Looy.

"Worthy ideas will flourish and attain their end," he predicted one day; "he who sows shall reap." . . . On another day he stated: "Generations follow upon generations and continue the fight. . . . The exhausted and the dead are replaced in the great struggle by young and fresh combatants. . . . And the army increases steadily." He would then add: "The song of the young legions rings louder and higher and they carry with greater pride the banner of the Lion which seemed to be slipping from tired hands. . . . The weaklings desert the flag and even the hearts of the most courageous are sometimes filled with doubt; the struggle of life crushes at times even the most adventurous among them. . . . But here and there a faithful old standard-bearer of the noble cause is to be found standing upright and proud. . . . And the soldiers view with confidence these living banners. . . . Carry the ideal on high! . . . For this road where the people are struggling for their rights is a long and rough one. . . . Fear not opposition or treachery! . . . Have respect, my friends, for every opinion and every belief."

"A fine man," exclaimed a young Jew from Amsterdam, and William was grateful to him for his approbation.

One Monday during November, Dolf rushed in with great news.

"I have been admitted to the 'Each to his own taste' club," he exclaimed with a certain amount of pride.

"What is that?"

"A literary society. . . . Only writers are admitted. . . . First of all one has to read one's composition. . . .

The archbishop's son is the president. Williams and his friend Schæpdryver of the Latin section are also members as well as the poets who write for the *Free Press*."

"Are there many members?" inquired William.

"There are nine of us!"

"And it is necessary to read an article?"

"Yes, and then you must offer a round of Schæpdryver and sing a song. We all join in the chorus and the music is by the poet Jan Wils."

Wanneer een lid van onzen kring
Een werk heeft afgemaakt,
Dan is het steeds hetzelfde ding
Waarnaar zijn wezen haakt.
Al is het proza of poezij
Dat hij teneder schreef,
Hij drinkt dan steeds verrukt en blij
Een liter beste seef!

"And will they admit any more members?"

"I will suggest your name," promised Dolf. "I have already spoken about you. Williams will give you his vote; he found that you were a good Flemish supporter because of the K.A. on your cap."

It was on a Sunday afternoon two weeks later that William was to submit his essay and read his composition before the members of the literary society. His heart contracted as he heard the bell jingle, but before he could gather himself together he found himself in the corridor of the archbishop's home. William had lost all his self-confidence. He followed along behind the young man of the house, who was very polite and who tried to make him feel at his ease. Jan Wils was improvising airs on the piano in the sitting room. His shiny, black hair hung down over his forehead. There were two writers seated on the lounge and they were applauding enthusiastically. Dolf cried out some word, but Jan Wils was just at that moment playing a very well-known English tune and the whole society was joining in the chorus:

"Daisy, Daisy, give me your answer, do . . ."

The late arrivals entered before the end of the song and the president, who did not have any too much confidence in his gathering of friends, led him into the parlor, where ash trays had been placed on the table.

After having repeatedly rung a bell he was finally able to obtain some attention and he began addressing the members:

"Gentlemen! It is with a glad heart that I greet you all, defenders that you are of our dear mother tongue, who never allow yourselves to forget the proverb: 'Art comes from steady practice!' . . . As it is each week the harvest of prose and of poetry will be rich and beautiful. . . . But before I give each one in turn the right to speak we must determine, after having listened to Mr. William Janssens' lecture, if he is worthy of being admitted to our honorable society, according to the customs and precedents."

"And buy us a round of drinks," demanded the red-haired youth.

"Gentlemen! I insistently beg of you not to interrupt me or create the slightest disturbance which might impress Mr. Janssens unfavorably. . . . Furthermore, we can't hold you in session very long, as the majority among us have still another reunion to attend. . . . Gentlemen! I earnestly beg of you to make use of the ash trays and not soil the floor (the president, indeed, remembered his mother's remonstrances). The floor is now free to Mr. Janssens."

William read his composition, which was a description of an old woman saying her prayers. Before very long his voice failed him. He was afraid of all the eyes fixed attentively upon him and he felt very small indeed among all these important people. When he had pronounced his last word they did not move. They were smoking their pipes and seemed quite calm and indifferent.

"Will you allow me to request you to please wait out in the corridor for a minute?" said the president to him very politely.

"This is not very encouraging," thought William to himself as he stood outside of the door awaiting his judgment. He could only overhear a confused sound. He could hear the president ring his bell and then, after it had be-

come quieter, he distinguished what was being said by the red-haired youth.

"Let him come in, but don't let him forget about the beer."

This eased him considerably. And now he has taken his place at the table alongside of these future writers and poets, smoking his pipe and sipping the frothy beer. The president was experiencing some difficulty with the foaming beer. The room was filled with smoke, but the ash trays remained empty. The floor, on the contrary, was covered with ashes. They all began singing with a great deal of conviction:

"When a member of our circle has completed a fine work . . ."

"Is there any member who has a composition to read?"

The writers looked discreetly at their empty glasses.

"Gentlemen!" observed the president, "I profoundly regret that I am unable to compliment you upon your enthusiasm for the nation's literature."

"I have two sonnets," admitted Jan Wils, "but I would like to examine them again."

"My dear friend and colleague, I earnestly beg of you to read your poems."

It proved to be a great success! After him it was de Schæpdryver's turn and he read a short piece, well written and well expressed, which was in Frans de Cort's style.

This was all, and the meeting was adjourned. But all the members remained together. After their literary session they were going to have dinner together . . . William felt ill at ease. He was expected home and he didn't know how to get away. Frans Rutsaert, whom he had severely criticized, was standing alongside of him and admitted that he had liked his piece very much.

"Still studying at the Atheneum?"

"Yes; I am in the fourth now . . ."

"Then you have Pol de Mont? There's a real man for you, eh?"

"Indeed; his words enthuse one!"

"I also had him for a professor. . . . Now I am employed by a business house . . . my father's. . . . It's not very enjoyable when one's head is filled with dreams. But I was unable to do otherwise."

"Of course not," admitted William.

All this troubled him somewhat, for he had not taken into consideration what he was going to do when he should leave school.

"Have you received a summons to go to the Flemish Club?"

"A summons?"

"Our club convenes today. We have sent an invitation to the students at the Atheneum. . . . There only remained a few of the old students. Every time that the members leave the school there is a crisis at the club. Therefore younger ones must be admitted in order that our relations with the school can be continued. Of course you will go along with us?"

"Certainly," replied William, who did not wish to annoy Rutsaert, realizing that there was no worthy excuse to offer and believing himself too old to admit that they were waiting for him at home.

"I am the president . . . but just as soon as the club is reorganized I will present my resignation. The newcomers must take the places of the old members. There is more work for me elsewhere. . . . As you know, the Flemish Club has a fine past. . . . It was founded almost twenty years ago, in 1885, just before the law of 1883 on general education was put into effect. . . . The Flemish laws are not enforced. . . ."

"But all that is changing now," offered William.

"Yes," replied Rutsaert gravely, "if we all fulfill our duty and arouse the feeble and open the eyes of those who are blind. . . . In this way Flanders will become Flanders again."

"I will do my full duty," said William to himself.

VI

The members and the students who had responded to this summons were waiting in the hall of the old "Anchor

Inn," near the milk market. William recognized some of the boys from other classes and also the little Jew who had once approved Pol de Mont.

Dr. Hansen, the librarian, was seated alone in the corner of the tavern, smoking his pipe and sipping his glass of beer. He had arranged the poems by Klaus Groth which Peter Benoit had set to music. The spiritual love he professed for his mother tongue and which he had given expression to in his poems was the pure stirring of his soul. His affections seemed to lead him toward the North—towards all that was Germanic, and the frontiers vanished before his visions. . . . Political frontiers were, therefore, no barrier to the progress of high ideals. William noticed how he would stroke his beard thoughtfully, taking a sip from the little glass next to his jug of beer and then plunging himself again in the cloud of smoke rising from his pipe. William was unable to take his eyes away from this man. He was one of the old soldiers in the fight, older even than Pol de Mont, and a friend and contemporary of the standard bearer Emmanuel Hiel. What were the visions he contemplated in the dense clouds of smoke! Did he see Bruges live once more as it had in the past? Did he see all Flanders spring to its feet in some day still to come?

A little later on, when the members of the "Elck wat Wilsers" had arrived, Rutsaert judged that it was time to open the session. Everybody ascended the narrow stairway. William followed Rutsaert. It was an enthusiastic gathering.

When everybody had their glass of barley water beside them on the table, the servant left the room, after having had one last good word with some old member, and Rutsaert got to his feet. He passed in review the members seated on both sides of the long table in the low-ceilinged room and began, saying:

"Gentlemen! It is with much pleasure that we note that our appeal has been heard! We see among us some new faces, students of the Atheneum who will soon fill our places in the struggle to have the law of 1883 thoroughly applied, and to gather together the Flemish students in

this struggle of ours to uphold our rights. . . . Gentlemen! we have a great many things to accomplish during this meeting: the admittance of new members . . . the replacing of members of the committee . . . a change to be made in our headquarters . . . communications to receive . . . the printing of new books. . . . Do all those present sign their names as members?"

"Honorable President," said the young Jew timidly, "is it permitted to ask a question? Is your club a political club? I want to understand the matter clearly, for you can readily appreciate that we Dutch must hold ourselves clear of all Belgian politics. . . . In Amsterdam we also have clubs. . . . We ask to have an answer for the foreigners' information. Does your club pretend to encourage friendship and mutual interests among the students?"

"I ask the right to speak," vehemently demanded David de Beer, who was one of the old members.

"The floor is given to David de Beer. . . ."

"In the first place I think I can reassure the new members as to our furthering the relations between students. But I am unable to let what the honorable speaker said go by without protesting. I am also from Amsterdam and I declare without hesitating that one can't term as political—and certainly not internal politics—when the Flemish people but ask for their own rights and battle for the restoration and the encouragement of our own language. . . . It is the duty of a Dutchman to back up this fight without hesitancy."

"Bravo!" cried all the members. "A triple bravo for de Beer!"

"We should offer a round of drinks," said the red-haired lad.

After the meeting the president allowed the names and the addresses of the new members to be written down.

"Five members have allowed their names to be inscribed. Gentlemen, the fight at the Atheneum can now be taken up again with new courage. . . . With five new propagandists the club recovers its former days of glory. . . . And now let us concern ourselves with the second question written on the order of the day—that is to say, the election of new

members to fill official posts. We have to elect two secretaries and a new counselor. . . . According to our old custom I propose the election of students who have interested themselves in the struggle. . . . Who proposes a candidate?"

No one spoke. Some of those present silently sipped their drink. Nobody seemed to want to have the post very much.

"I suggest," the president then said, "Mr. William Janssens, one of our most promising young literary men. I propose that he be made the chief secretary by a hand vote."

The applause was not lacking and William, a little non-plused, thanked them for the confidence placed in him.

"I would like to offer my modest services to the society," declared the young Dutchman.

"And William will be made the counselor," suggested Dolf.

Again the assembly approved with applause.

"Gentlemen," resumed the president, "you now have to make a most important decision. The club, in order to keep its self-respect, is obliged to move. Indeed, will we allow the owner here to find fault with us because we spend too little and burn too much light! . . . We have considered the matter carefully and we suggest that you come to the decision today, that from now on we will hold our meetings at the 'White Lion.' This is the building used by the Flemish students of the Commercial College."

"Bravo!"

"In addition I have some good news to give you. One of our honorary members, who wishes to remain unknown, offers a jug of beer to every one in order to celebrate suitably this decision of ours. . . ."

"A triple bravo!" cried the members.

"I must, furthermore, tell you that the Van Maerlant-zonen families, of Bruges and Ghent, have patched up their differences and that the question of forming a society in the capital is being seriously considered."

"Bravo!"

"The struggle now appears in a favorable light," said Schæpdryver.

"We can now concern ourselves with the lottery of the books which have been sent; there are five prizes. . . . In the meantime our friend Meulemans will entertain us at the piano. . . . Comrade Williams will favor us with his appreciated talent and sing the 'Maiden in Love.' . . ."

With his cap on the back of his head Williams started singing with conviction:

"Meisken jong, mijn maagdeken teer,
Hoe kom ik uw huizeken neer?
Aan mijn deurken is een klink
Trek aan't koordeken dat open ging
Sprak het lodderig meisken!"

The chorus was loudly taken up by all the assembly. William forgot all about the hours and what time it was, and also that they were waiting for him at home. He won a volume by old Smits. The singers alternated at the piano, the Flemish fatherland was praised in song, the glasses of beer were drained and jolly jokes were told all around.

The *Free Press* was attacked! Every one jumped to their feet. The standard bearer unfurled his faded flag and swung it back and forth over their heads. They will never conquer it! "Zy zullen hem niet temmen! . . ."

"Here is the record book," said Rutsaert while the old servant went around to collect his tips. "You sign for the dues and Samson will call out the names. Here's the order of the day."

The members left the hall noisily. The old poet was still there, drinking and lost in his dreams. . . .

They marched along in the street behind their flag towards their new meeting hall. The flag indeed could not be left behind them!

"I can't go along with you," said William to Rutsaert. "I couldn't foresee that it would be so late and they are waiting for me at home."

"Until next Sunday, then. . . ."

In the distance the companions were singing their

patriotic songs. Bells began tolling. . . . Tingling with delight William finally reached his home.

"We will forget about it for this time," said his father. "Where have you been?"

"I have been made a member of two societies," admitted William.

"What's that you say! And two at a time? . . . It will be up to you to pay your fees with your Sunday allowance."

"Yes, father," agreed William.

His heart was burning with a wild flame which prevented him from thinking of how he would be able to solve the problem.

AKOM THE ETERNAL

JULIUS PEKAR

HOT and burning is the air, and dry and parched the steppe stretches away and away. Now, however, the sun's triumphant march begins to slacken. A tiny breeze is stirring the murmuring trees and shrubs, and the evening's cool fragrance is beginning to float down upon the banks of the narrow streamlets which break the monotony of the steppe. The plain begins to drowse. The sun's low, golden beams make longer the shadows of the tall Hun riders, who, with the endless, level plain, which seems like a weary giant, are beginning to be enveloped in the twilight gloom. All the earth is weary and goes at once to sleep, perhaps to dream strange dreams. Perhaps, in fact, it is this very dream of the earth which appears as a hostile vision by the Danube's banks as the sun is setting in the west. For there in the sky an immense, monstrous holocaust, a slaughter inflicted by a world at war, is evolving. Hundreds of peoples, and the cloudy hosts of heaven, are plunging together there to break asunder each other's weapons. A sea of blood is pouring forth and seems to flow to the horizon's farthest limits. Yet the terrible combat is silent, the storm rages noiselessly, and the song of battle, the torture of the dying and the glory of the conqueror are told only by raging colors in the skies. What is this combat, who are the victims, who are the winners?

Two shrewd eyes are regarding the prospect from a single point. Two priestly eyes are reading the future from this cloudy struggle. The two burning eyes of the pagan seer seem about to leap from their orbits. Who are the combatants, yonder? Who is the enemy? Rome? Byzantium? Where is the opposing Catalaunian camp, in this plain of Attila's warfare?

The swirling clouds evolve, form strange figures in the sky, and the seeker's eyes search for the leaders of the fray. And beneath these eyes the dry old face suddenly pales, the gray beard and the long, white, shaggy Mongolian locks flutter with agitation, and the little magic bells, sewn upon the old man's robe, tinkle up and down his half frozen body. The bells show the presence of danger, which is also announced by the little drum hanging at the graybeard's side. The drum is gayly adorned with filigree and copper work. It is a sacred drum, and resounds without the aid of human hands, its beating becoming gradually more and more distinct. Its sounds and throbs are words, which only the initiated can understand. The old sage hears and understands them, and they cause him to fall into a religious trance, or ecstasy. With his thin, dry old hand he caressingly lifts his little companion to his hot cheek, and now the drum whispers a message to him in its beating.

"Old Akom, perpetual Akom," says the drum, "now you may write. Write quickly. Carve the history of the future in the sacred, ancestral tree. Great and terrible events shall come to pass. Write the future and, ere it become reality, spread it broadcast with the quickness of the speedy lightning flash, so that those who come may read your words, may listen and, perhaps this time, obey your mute commands."

Akom presses the magic drum closely to his throbbing temples. He embraces it with a fond caress, and struggling with himself, he murmurs, "Ought I to write? Ought I to carve this thing? Why, my servant? Ought I to declare the danger? For ever have my predictions been fulfilled, and never hath man hearkened unto me." But the little magic drum beats out the mysterious continuation of its threnody.

"Ah, yes, truly we have always been unheeded. And yet you know well that you have great power over the future of men, through the grace of the good God and of the great and noble Mother, Earth. You know that you are Akom, the Eternal. You know that, however changed your body, you are still alive after a thousand years,

that the soul of the people lives in you, and that your hand grasps the present of this, your people. You know that the great God has revealed the future to you so that this chosen and divinely governed people may control its fate to its own advantage, when such a thing is well, by hearkening to your warnings and counsel. For you are a sacred and mysterious soul, dwelling apart, the chosen voice of God, and one high in the favor of the divine."

"Yes," murmurs the old sage, "my people might indeed make use of my power, but it refuses to do so. Tell me, explain, why not, my little servant, my magic friend? Why do they not heed me? I show my people the dangers concealed within their future. I reveal these dangers in ample season, and I point out the divine will, but what happens? My people are always making sacred vows and then, as if possessed from the first by Satan, begin to waver and doubt, until the swift decision arrives at the critical moment, and the fateful event occurs. The people seem to have the true power of choosing, but perhaps after all God's will is ever accomplished. Perhaps God only wants to say, 'I will give thee thy free will, I will bestow a high privilege on thee, foolish mankind, thou canst control thy fate as thou wilt, every possibility is left to thee, and yet, behold, the future remains unalterable.' Yes, the future may remain unchanged, as it was written in the beginning. My little servant, canst thou remember? We prophesied long before the days of Attila's great combat, we showed to him how all the slaughter would end, yet the great lord and ruler preferred to heed the Gothic and Germanic soothsayers."

But the drumbeats grow louder. "Perhaps the people will now listen. It must listen, some day! The great moment has come. Old Akom, Akom the Eternal, look about you. Do you see?"

"Yes, I see."

Before the sage's eyes the prophetic vision begins to unfold, and it terrifies the sage. "Woe, woe! Frightful woe. The original curse is being fulfilled. Neither Rome nor Byzantium appear yonder, and no strange peoples are there. No. Huns are fighting against Huns. The chosen

people are killing each other. Sons of Hunnish blood, sons born of the common mother, are slaying themselves. Those so struggling and dying there are sons, brothers, children of Hunnish women. The Fifty Brothers are there, face to face in battle. Among the cloudy images Akom recognizes the powerful and noble Ellak, raging Dengezikh of the dark and gloomy countenance, the lightning-like Irnak. And opposed to these are the sly Emnedzar of Byzantium, wild Cheism of the long, red hair, and the giant Uzindur, born of Gothic blood.

Brother Ortlieb, of the Vandal locks of gold, is engaged in mortal combat with the childlike Csaba. All seem swallowed up in the cloudy maelstrom. What shall emerge? Sons of the Huns are vanquished. Ellak falls from his dim horse, sinking into the blood-red of the sunset. Csaba is still wavering. A fresh cloudy host storms between, and drives back the struggling children of the Huns. There is the Germanic Ardarikh. His horse leaps over a sea of blood, runs to the horizon and stands there ready, as if rooted to the soil. Now he comes back with all his people, plunges on in a mad gallop, and points to the sacred tower with his glittering sword. It is finished. The light of the sunset is fading, the vision grows dim.

The old man falls down in a religious sleep like unto death. He clasps the magic drum more closely as he murmurs, "Yes, yes, there are all the sons, but where is the father? I see him not, my little servant. Where is the father hidden?"

And the little drum whispers, with rapid beats, "Let us arise. Then shalt thou see. There—there he is!"

Akom staggers to his feet and gazes westward. The picture is now altered. The heavenly scene is changed. The vision of the vast combat is no more, but has obscurely melted together into a dark purple curtain of clouds. At the foot of the curtain, at the level of the horizon, appears only a dark coffin, outlined by gloomy clouds, and behind it is sinking the sun, still all aglow, in a background blood-red in color and formed of golden mist. A throng of clouds now envelops the cloudy coffin, as if thronging peoples were enclosing the coffin, to bear it to the tomb. A pause,

a breath, and the coffin begins to descend. It sinks below the horizon, seeming to vanish beneath the surface of the Danube.

The little drum says, "Have you seen, Akom? It is written. It must happen there, if you do not give the needed warning."

"Tell me, my servant, tell me——"

The drum is almost whispering now, almost inaudible. Akom the Eternal listens, repeating the word he hears, that he may not forget it.

"Ildiko!"

All is now silent. The little servant has closed the prophecy. The sage anxiously inquires, "Will my people hearken, will they obey?"

But there is no reply. The little drum has lost its voice. It is now but soulless strips of wood, a dumb and hollow thing.

The storm in the skies has passed, but the heavenly dream seems still to lie heavy upon the earth. Across the plain comes a wailing sound as if from afar. The night wind is rising. It comes from the marshy woods of the Theiss, that dark branch of the Danube. Thence bring the birds winging away from the swamps the shadows of night upon their wings. Quickly they cast these shadows down upon this sheltered corner of the great, sad plain, which serves to hold the flower of the Hunnish hosts.

There, toward the rear, lies a bare, insignificant hill, like an island in the surrounding stretches. On this fearful center of the great, fearful, breathless world, which seems, as in a legendary tale, to be awaiting the onslaught of a pack of leaping leopards, here, at this very point, shall burst the gathering storm of the world. Here shall be wreaked the monstrous, destructive will which shall overthrow peoples and crowns in an indistinguishable heap. Here shall have play that personality, that spirit, whose mere name the sovereign Emperor of Byzantium shall dare to speak aloud only after he has crossed himself—the name of Attila.

Here, on this hillock, at the world's center, the world's cradle, sits the King of Kings, Lord of the Seven Roads

of the World. The seat is not lofty, yet thence the lord can look far, to the North Sea and to the Golden Horn. His words echo forth from this little eminence to all quarters of the earth. His voice echoes to China and to Rome. About this spot are grouped men of many nations, repeating, with dread, the name of the Hunnish lord and chief, uttered by a hundred throats in a hundred different languages. However differently his tribal name be written, it is pronounced the same in every tongue: The Hun.

And is this spot a fortress? Yes, a fortress like a city, like a capital city, supported on piles. For massive and lovely palaces stand here. Within the palaces dwell the Hunnish leaders, allied Turkish princes and generals, and servile kings, become humble vassals. The people ruled by the great lord is far-scattered. It dwells on the Volga and the Rhine, on the hither side of the Theiss, and beyond the Danube, but here it is merely a visitor, for it serves as a pledge and supplies hostages and security for tribute to be levied. The town, its kings and its palaces, all look toward a single point, which they seek out as heliotrope and sunflowers turn to the sun. This point lies upon the little hillock. For there is reared an artificial mound, made of earth which the warriors of this great caravansary have carried thither in their helmets. The broad, many-towered wooden fortress, possessed by the great world lord, covers the entire hillock. It is constructed of piles, and is itself a city.

Within it dwell not alone the women, but also the Fifty Sons. Yet these hostile piles and palisades were never hewn from native trees. How have the different kinds of timber, the cedar and the palms, come here? The Huns have brought these ancient houses, these old shelters, from afar, upon their wagons. They have brought them from their origins in Asia, to be assembled and set up together here. Their origins are shrouded in darkness, but the idols at their doors, the dragons, and their gaudy towers seem insolently to menace the purplish glow in the western sky. At the summit of the hill, a sacred Hunnish temple stands, from whose courtyard rears itself the sacred, four-cornered tower, higher than the great leader's house,

higher than the loftiest tree of the region. The roof is triangular. Near one gable extends a lofty staff, from which hangs a banner of horsehair, the sign of the world's lord and ruler. About the tower is wreathed a graceful balcony.

Now, near the tower, Akom has come, wearied by the raging, divine struggle which has occurred within him, and returning to consciousness from his religious ecstasy only with pain and fatigue. Supporting himself against a support of the balcony, he goes slowly about the tower, looks far to the distance, and studies the heavens above. He calls to the stars, to note the position of the heavenly host at this important moment. He calls to them, and they come forth. There are Auriga, Antares, Venus, Orion, but Akom seeks Mars, Mars of the eyes of blood, for Mars carries weight, events will depend upon his will. Akom finds Mars hiding among the stars, marks his position, and then looks toward Hunnivar, the stronghold of the Huns. The nocturnal gayety is wildly roaring all about. Music is resounding, the darkness is pierced by a thousand lights of different color, a million torches seem on fire, a host of sparkling will o' the wisps seem to have swarmed together from the outlying swamps. Lamps are gleaming, innumerable paper lanterns swing in and out among the foliage, and all these lights reveal the festive dances revolving all about.

Songs echo ever more gayly, joy is becoming more unrestrained, the illuminated palaces are more clearly visible. There are the palaces of the Kazars, the Alans, of the Herulian kings, and of the three kings of the Ostrogoths. The latter are beloved allies, and are named Velemir, Theodemir and Videmir. Their dwellings blaze with light. Still brighter glows this palace of the Germanic Ardarikh. It is just below that of Etelvar, and is the most favored and honored of all. The koboz, that national instrument of music, is heard everywhere. All the byways are swarming with a throng of white-clad women. All the young people are bedecked with flowers. The young girls, in little groups, wear long veils and wander in and out through the crowd.

Every one is urging forward in the same direction. All

the people are progressing toward the southern gate, whose pillars, lit by a thousand candles, stand out sharply against the surrounding darkness. All the white plain about is seething with festivity. Camp fires glow on every side. The path leading up to the citadel is lit up by rows of torches. Far away a sudden gleam appears, as if the Milky Way were falling upon the earth. The gleam proceeds from countless torches, and a host of lights is mounting towards the citadel and its tower between the lane of torchlight. Signals from lights and from horns stir the throng. They are coming, they are coming, the great lord and his bride. Below and about the tower a mighty movement presses on. In the courtyard of the throne-room, which is as bright as day, the Hunnish princes are assembling, wearing golden spurs and swords bedecked with garlands, to do honor to their father. They joyfully embrace him, with transports of affection.

Akom looks away. A deep sigh emerges from his breast. Behind Ellak, Cheism and Emnedzar are nodding their heads together, and Ortlieb is whispering something to them. All three grasp their swords involuntarily, those swords so bedecked with blooms. Now the magic drum wakes again, and resounds by the sage's side. He lifts it to his temple and nods his head. From the balcony, he goes inside the tower, walking slowly upon the creaking cedar stairs.

He gains the sanctum sanctorum, the Holy of Holies. The hall is softly carpeted. On the eastern side are placed the sacred birds, whose eyes are of rubies, and the altar. The altar was carved, long ago, from green wood growing on the banks of the Yellow River, by Chinese artists belonging to the Csetke tribe of the conquerors. The Hunnish Trinity are borne upon the altar. The Trinity were carved long ago from ebony, surrounded by golden haloes and flames. They were composed of the Great God, the Great Happy Goddess, and the Earth Maiden. Below the altar lies a great, heavy, iron chest, bearing gold clasps and containing the Magic Sword, or Sword of God.

The sanctuary, however, revealed none of these things at this moment, for it was completely dark, except for a

single light burning on the floor below the sacred tree. Akom knelt before this trunk, bearing the notching knife. It was a powerful cedar trunk, a hundred years old, and twice the height of a man. It was embedded in the earth, protruded through the planks of the flooring and supported the staff and horsehair emblem floating above the roof overhead.

Akom gazed reverently at the tree, feeling with trembling hand the three sides into which it was fashioned, and which were carefully smoothed and anointed with balsamic oils. Beneath his fingers lay carved, clear-cut hieroglyphics, showing the history of the Huns, those times once of the future which had so soon become those of the past. Those hieroglyphics were uninterrupted. They were exact as they stood, and had never required correction. Every prophecy carved on the sacred tree had been fulfilled.

The inscriptions were carved in simple, heavy letters, all of the same kind, for the same individuality had carved them during long centuries. For the tree and Akom were alike eternal. His body became transformed, but his being, his ego, remained ever the same. A mysterious heritage of eternity protected him from the changes of time. He had no past, he underwent no development, for he lived in a never-ending present, in which the past and the future were absorbed, in a state of indifference, and without temporal distinction. It was for this reason that he could view the future so clearly. For him Time was the same, in the fields, in the forests, and at the sunset.

The sacred drum now beat again for him: "Write. Carve the prophecy, make the eternal writing for the last time with this faithful hand."

Akom sighed with relief. His parchment-like face revealed a momentary gleam. He felt himself that his frame, his fleshly instrument, was now crumbling. The time was at hand for him to quit his mortal envelope and seek another. He inquired of the drum, "My little servant, are we going forth?"

And the drum replied, "This very night. Hasten."

Akom quickly smeared one side of the sacred tree with balsam, and reflected. What had been his last bodily

change, occurring seventy earthly years ago? He remembered himself in the guise of a little boy, playing in the sands on the bank of the Volga, when the sacred seers and priests appeared, with their great beards. They had looked about them, as if seeking somebody. One of them, spying Akom, had said, "You there—you—at play on the bank—come, God is calling you." He had felt afraid, had wept, but had finally gone with the seers. They had put him in a dark, carpeted room, at one end of which a group of kneeling priests were embracing a dying old man.

The upper part of his worn, dry old body was bare, and rare and costly garments lay piled before him, with various other articles. "Come, now," had said the priests, "choose whatever you wish from these garments and other things. You may have whatever you wish." Akom remembered how he had plucked up courage, knelt down, and had suddenly begun to feel that he was no longer his old self. His hand was moved by a new will. He desired no gold or jewels. He sought only the sage's garment, which had just been removed from the dying man. It was trimmed with little bells. And he rejected all the other things, except the sage's drum. "Hang it from your neck," he was told, and did so. Then he knelt before the dying man, who looked at him with an expression of pleasure and satisfaction on his face. At a single glance, he poured forth his whole being into the being of the young man, Akom. He then clasped Akom closely, and the youth remained immobile there, until the wrinkled old arms were beginning to get cold.

When Akom finally went away he no longer recognized his own mother. His eyes were elsewhere. He had become another personality, Akom the Eternal. He could see, know and remember not only the past, but the future as well. So it had occurred, seventy years ago. Now he had become the old man and now, who was to be the child to replace him? There were people living about the tower, about the sacred courtyard—there were many families, many servants, and perhaps he could find there a young person whom he might call to the task.

The magic drum counseled, "Write: 'and on this day

Attila espoused the Burgundian maiden, Ildiko. And Ildiko was betrothed by the general Aetius with Attila on the night after the Catalaunian surrender. Ildiko shall slay the king on the wedding day, and the empire of the Huns shall vanish.' ”

Akom carved these words on the sacred trunk with his shining knife. And the drum solemnly beat out the words, “Now let thy will be done. The King is coming.”

Within the sanctuary all was breathlessly still. Without, the music and joy of the royal celebration were resounding. Steps were now heard approaching the temple, and a key groaned in the lock of the outer door. It was the great lord, for nobody save he possessed the key to this door.

The light inside flared up, but the tower door remained yet dark. Somebody came in. The lord entered. He was not tall, but broad-shouldered, with muscular neck and bulky body. The lord is wearing a simple dress, quite unadorned, the national dolman, which reaches to his legs, below. A fine yellow jacket is worn above. No jewels, no golden trappings, no brilliant ornaments, appear. His glowing eyes seem to emit sparks. They are small and set deeply under the shelter of the heavy eyebrows and within the frame of the broad face. His expression is stern, strong-willed, and irascible, and white hairs are appearing in his short beard. He walks with slow, imposing strides.

“I am come, Akom.”

Akom points to the sacred tree. “Thy fate is calling thee, my king. The future is calling to thee, before it becomes the past. Read——”

The king interrupts, with an unwilling smile. “What! Can you not leave me in peace, even on my wedding day?”

“I must speak, whenever Fate demands.”

“And has Fate to speak even today, on the eve of my wedding? Can Fate not even wait for that?” Again sparks seem to fly from the great lord's eyes. “Today I wish to hold festival. Do you understand? Nobody shall venture to disturb Attila's pleasure! Attila will consult Fate tomorrow, and not before.”

“Tomorrow it will be too late.”

The great lord laughs scornfully, and Akom begs him pitifully to listen. "Great Lord, you may remember the Catalaunian field. Will you still refuse to hearken to me?"

"Come! Does your soothsaying have to occur on this night of all nights?"

"Yes, my lord."

The Lord of the World tossed high his head. "I have already had sufficient counsel."

"Who hath bestowed it?"

"The Gothic sages, the Germanic prophets, the seers of the Alans and the Burgundians. And not one but foretells fair fortune, peace, honor and an heir of the worthiest sort."

"Great Lord, all these are enemies."

"You lie!"

Akom answered, with dignity, "God doth not lie, and doeth thee the favor to warn thee through me. Wilt thou not hearken to Akom?"

But the king is impatient. "How wearisome all this! I tell you, the Goths, the Germans, the Burgundians, are all my friends. They are my faithful servants, my true allies, my brave watchdogs."

"Ah, they are dogs who wait but for the moment when they may bite thee." And fearfully, and in a lower tone, the seer continued, "And thy bride, Great Lord——"

The voice of the leader rang so mightily forth that even the altar seemed to vibrate. "That name, the name of Ildiko, is to be spoken by no man on earth save me!"

Akom points to the sacred tree. "As God wills. And I say to thee, in the words of God, that thou shouldst never marry with Ildiko. For the prophecy is here!"

The great lord hears, but he is also hearkening to the voice of his roused passions. Outside, he hears music and melody, rising high amid the great festal night. Ildiko's maidens are singing a caressing song of Burgundy, a song to accompany her fortunate and blissful union with the great Hun. The great king hears the music as if bewitched, forgets his wrath, and, absently, bends over Akom and turns to the sacred tree. Distractedly he begins to read the carven inscription, but suddenly starts with violent

emotion as he proceeds. With fixed and rigid gaze bent upon the old cedar tree, he repeats between his teeth, in a fierce, low voice, "Ildiko—Aetius—Ildiko shall kill the king on his wedding night." As he reads, he becomes crafty, surveys Akom with suspicion, and Akom, troubled and perplexed, hears with terror the thundering words of the ruler of the earth, "Wisdom or foolishness, whatever else it be, this judgment is traitorous. And the traitor, that is you, Akom, a false and dishonorable man!"

"Great Lord, it is your own God who speaks through me."

"Enough! Can the Hunnish God, then, imagine that I shall be thus coldly slain? Is the empire fashioned by the Sword of God thus easily to collapse? Who hath told thee all this? Perhaps you have been beguiled by some of those Huns who desire to reduce me to a mere petty king and to cause me to lose my place as Emperor of the World and of all the peoples thereof?"

Akom starts back, retreating almost to the sacred flame.

"Oh, cursed from the beginning! Great Lord, wouldst thou sooner believe the soothsayers of your own enemies? You turn your back upon the God of the Huns, who would protect you? Be careful, or that God will likewise turn his back upon thee!"

The king lays his hand upon the door and says, "Listen to my decision. This very night shalt thou give over thy soul to a new Akom. Tomorrow thou shalt be dead. You are seeing Attila for the last time."

Akom sadly acquiesces. "I see the great king for the last time."

The ruler departs. The little magic drum begins its beating.

"You are right, Akom. The lofty favor of God has been offered in vain. The future cannot now be altered. Let us now go away——"

"But, my little servant, whom shall I call to replace me?"

"Call the little beggar child, Besse. He has eyes of the true fire. Bestow your spirit upon him. But guard, for the moment, your own earthly form, for there is yet need of thy frame."

The festal moment is passing, the night is growing old. The moon is low, and high in the heavens stands the great king whom the Romans call Orion, and with him is Aldebaran, friend of the fleeing. The wedding awaits its caresses, and all the lights of the jealous night are slowly fading. Now only the Germanic palace remains bright. In the palace, with Ardarikh, every man is now armed to the teeth. Many are there. There are the three Gothic kings, there are lords of the Turks, of the Ostrogoths, there are the Burgundian knights and there are Attila's own sons, Emenvar, Gheison, Tsindur, Alieb, and all clad in Germanic garments.

None of these are drinking wine. They are watchfully casting glances into the night outside. Etelvar is hidden in the darkness. Attila is beginning his bridal night. No light remains at the houses of the other Hunnish sons. Every man is waiting, waiting. And in the sacred courtyard, in the sage's dwelling, sleep is also absent. Within the large, dimly illuminated room, the drum is softly beating and, amid the glow of the dying lamp Akom falls into his religious ecstasy. He is grasped by the spirits, his bare, dry shoulders move convulsively to and fro, his eyes stare rigidly about, his lips are all a-tremble, he moves his feeble arms, he is impatient to transfer his soul to the new Akom.

For Besse, the beggar child, has come. He sees the many different garments of the sage. He is bewildered. He is charmed by the sight of gold, but, as he extends his hand, the little magic drum begins to speak, hidden beneath the garments of Akom. The little Besse remains erect, his eyes open wide, his face is aglow, and the faces of the sacred priests are shining.

"Thou desirest it, with all thy heart? Quickly, then!" They clothe him in the garments, but the child seems not fully satisfied. "What do you wish?" But the child only shrugs his shoulders and says, "I don't know what I wish." But, as soon as he hears the beating of the magic drum, which is filling the sanctuary with its sacred, mysterious voice, he joyfully extends his hand toward it, takes the drum, and clasps it closely to him, holding it tightly against

his temples. They ask him, "Do you understand what it says?" And the child replies, "Yes, I understand it well. It says, 'Thou art the chosen one. Take me, preserve me, I must be with thee.'" All kneel down in prayer. "Yes, it is indeed he, he is Heaven's choice!"

Little Besse hangs the drum to his neck and throws himself into the embrace of the expiring Akom. In a long, lingering glance, Akom bestows his soul upon the child, consecrating him with the words, "Thou art Akom, Akom the Eternal, possessing all knowledge, knowing all mysteries, reading the past and the future."

As the child stands up, he possesses new eyes and new features. As upon a throne, he sits down in the place of the departed Akom, upon the sacred cushion. First among all the priests to do him homage is the presence of the old Akom, now altered. For his countenance is blank and empty, his eyes are lifeless, he is only a soulless and ordinary mortal being.

Now the night is far advanced. Sirius is shining overhead. The stronghold, Hunnivar, is plunged in a deep sleep. Suddenly a terrible cry, uttered by Etelvar, rings out, from the direction of the royal dwelling. Ardarikh roars, "The signal of Ildikol!" Yes, it has all come to pass. The Goths surge forth stormily, the Burgundians fly to the spot. The light flickers up, the table is overthrown and the Germanic kings and the faithless Hunnish sons leap forth with gleaming blades. The signals of their horns resound, their horsemen are galloping far and wide upon the plain, and, within the waking citadel, Hunnivar, the king's body-guards are being slain.

In a voice of thunder, the frightful news echoes to the skies: "The Great Lord is slain!" "He is dead," cry the Goths. "He is murdered," roar the Huns. And the opposing parties engage in combat at the hillside, before the very doors of the sacred chamber of the Hunnish God. Flowers are dying on the sword-hilts, and festal roses are drowning in a sea of blood. The Germanic kings charge the hillock, storming madly into the king's chamber. Before the king's bed and its royal-purple curtain stand, with drawn swords, the true sons of the great lord. They are of pure Hunnish

blood. And, like a noble, white pillar, like a Germanic goddess, Ildiko also appears, standing there in her glorious night attire. She is a mighty, magical Valkyrie. Her loose and flowing hair is tossed abroad like a golden mane and traitorous, lying tears are in her blue eyes. But on her scornful lips is a smile of joy, and revenge seems jubilant upon her faithless mouth. "That hand is bloody," cries Ellak, and throws her to the ground as the Germans rush to rescue her. Raging Ardarikh's russet beard waves wildly as he roars, "Touch her not!" Ildiko seeks protection with the foe, and a bitter combat opens. The only quiet presence is that of the Great Ruler, who lies weltering in his blood, resting at last. In the heat of the combat Ellak beholds the dead king, and dumbly lets his great sword fall. "Revenge should come not now, but later. Now we must bury our father worthily, as becomes him!"

The frightful vision seen in the western skies has been fulfilled. The prophecy of Akom is now reality. The great coffin is lying upon the bier. The soul of the mighty king is borne to the shades by giant arms. The people rush together to bury Attila, the Departed, and, just as the coffin sank below the horizon in the vision, so now in fact the body of Attila sinks beneath the waters of the great, silent river.

Now ensue the later events, terrible, but become inevitable truth, as Akom has signified would be the result. Combats thicken and are waged not between aliens, but between the Huns themselves. The tribes of the Hunnish sons spill blood like water. Csaba is routed, and the field of slaughter is left to the fierce Ardarikh, the conqueror. He and his rush forward to make victory complete, and his sword is turned against the sacred tower of the citadel, Hunnivar.

All is ruin, waste, confusion, destruction. The smoking site and citadel burn like resin. The flames ascend to the skies as from a gigantic torch. The blaze is seen at Rome and at Khiva. The vassal kings view the monstrous pillar of flame with childlike joy. They rejoice and sing. For they will burn every memory, every trace of the Huns to

dust and ashes. The Hunnish existence and era shall vanish from the earth. And the fear of the Huns, the shame of confessing that fear, that shall likewise cease. For now is the moment of revenge and of weeping. The feelings of revenge and destruction are strong upon the victors. Nothing must be preserved. The flames consume all. The gold of the Huns is sought only in the ashes of the fires which leave only the formless metal.

Ardarikh walks about, watching the fire. Now he sees that the old, sacred tower, the Hunnish sanctuary, is burned to the ground and reduced to heaps of cinders. "Leave it as it is," he commands. "It is not worth searching in. Whatever was in it has been utterly destroyed." But his servants are greedy, attempt a search, and come back with empty hands, but yet not all in vain.

"O King, no goods, indeed, remain, yet we bring thee something, nevertheless. Beneath the smoking balcony we found this old man, and this child."

Ardarikh looks up, attentively. "Ye have done well," he says. "Your search has not been vain. This old man was the sage, revered and honored, of the Huns. He wears the priestly garment, to which the bells are attached. Nay, but are you not Akom, Akom the Eternal?"

A low sigh is the only answer, save for the whispered words, "Yes, I am the——"

"To the cross with him! His crucifixion will indeed make our task complete! With him, the very core and heart of the Huns shall perish!"

"And the child, O King? See, he is running away!"

Ardarikh nods, scornfully. "Aye, let him run!"

On the evening of that same dread day, the Germans march away. Ever and anon Ardarikh turns round to look behind. Against the sky, lit by the setting sun, the cross bearing old Akom stands, clearly limned and sinister. The king nods his head with satisfaction.

"All is now well ordered, the ground is cleared. The devilish race of the Huns is extinguished, not with Attila, not with his citadel, Hunnivar, but with this heap of ruin and ashes! Let us march onward!" And the Germans march away, away. And in the night's gathering darkness

they leave a wasted hill of death to mark the extinct citadel of the great Attila.

The true Akom, the child, the surviving Akom, has been hiding among the reeds. In the dark, he creeps among the smoking cinders and succeeds, with great difficulty, in removing the old man from his cross. He takes the old man's garment, with its bells, for his own uses. For, in order to deceive the Germans, old Akom had clad himself again in his wonted vestments. Now, when he has the garment of the dead old seer, the child reverently buries these poor remains among the ruins of those ashen heaps which comprise all that is left of the Holy of Holies of the Huns.

Until the morning star appears in the heavens, the child, the new Akom, occupies himself in clearing away the ruins of the sanctuary. The task is a heavy one, but soon others who have also fled come creeping out of the reeds. Alas, they are but few! No others have escaped destruction, unless, perchance, there be a handful who have fled far away. These few, however, who are at hand, aid the new Akom in his toil. And lo, beneath the ashes, they find the old sacred cedar tree, all unharmed. What joy is theirs! From the ruins they find timbers, planks, unburned fragments of things, and so they build about the cedar tree a rude shelter, long and narrow.

No need have the survivors to ask the name of this child whom they have found before them at the ruins, and whose toil they have lightened. And they build for him a hut, to stand as the sacred tower. For they are protecting and aiding Akom, Akom the Eternal. They must hunt, they must fish, they must provide clothing, and of all that they find the best must be bestowed upon their sage.

They look upon the child as one sent of God. When he now falls into a religious syncope and trance, they all kneel low about him and hearken unto his words. The child grows fast. The mantle and its bells soon cease to be too large for that young frame. He is a man long before the children about him can reach that estate, and his divine eyes begin to read all the mysteries of future days. The Holy Spirit is upon him, and he lives beloved of all. All hearken unto him, all repeat his words, over and over.

"Have ye heard the truth? The great lord Attila is departed, and his enemies believe that he has been destroyed, with his empire, forever. They are dupes and fools. Attila's heritage lives. Akom the Eternal sees it, knows it, and he alone possesses the secret. For Akom has the memories of the past, the secret of the future, and he himself is the earnest of the sacred promise made on High. That promise must be fulfilled. The great heritage left by Attila must be assumed by a rightful heir, in good time."

So spake the new Akom. And he carved symbols on the sacred tree while in his deep, religious swoon. The symbols proclaim that, fifteen generations after, the appointed time shall arrive for the moment of the fulfillment. And Akom must live on until this time. And to the genuine heir shall be given the heritage, and with it this cedar tree.

Time passes away. Storms rage and fade around the sanctuary of Attila and the Huns. About the little hut roads traveled far by men wind away to all the corners of the earth. Events occur, peoples arrive and depart, cities are born and die, the fateful things of the world evolve, yet still remains the hut of Akom, all unharmed. It is not worth attacking. It arouses no curiosity whatever. The Earth Maiden clothes it every springtime, in fresh, green garments. No trace of the old Hunnic remains. The ashes and dust of the former fortress and sanctuary have been far scattered by the ruthless winds blowing over the steppe. The wind has buried all the traces, and the wind causes them to be forgotten. Only Akom, Akom the Eternal, living in safe seclusion, remembers. He keeps his secret well, through many changing human epochs. He writes and carves his secret, and the future, for himself alone, in the grasses of the plain and in the wood of the forests, and waits, biding his time.

Peoples, wars, conflicts, all go their ways, all take up the march unto the grave. Nations rise, engage in mutual struggles, live and die through their many tempests. The little hillock sees all these things pass. It lifts its head above rivers of blood. From its hut, representing the tower of former days, Akom beholds the terrors of hell. He sees

the terrible Lombards file by, wearing long, green beards. He witnesses the pale-skinned Slavic hordes. He survives the passing of the blue-eyed Augiscyres, of the Bitlugores, and of all the other races which pour through Central Europe only to rise and decay. All are mounted on horseback, all look up at the hillock, and all ask each other, "Attila! Attila, the Hun! what can you tell us of him? Where did he live? Where was his throne?" And Akom hears these questions, but never replies.

Now comes a mighty flood of peoples, no river, but a wide and raging human sea. It swells over the plain. Among its figures are forms like those of the Turks. The horses are small. Akom looks again, for these men resemble the Huns. Their hair, though, stands out stiffly, in three directions. Their words can be understood by his Hunnish ears. They must surely be his brothers, or his foster brothers, men who dwelt with him of old near the old sanctuary, and it is their voices which whisper to him.

They are the Avars. They have been making conquests. They have avenged Ardarikh's campaigns and driven all the Germans before them. Their leader seeks the former citadel and throne of Attila. He rides hither and yon, seeking, spying, searching everywhere. He is named Bajan. Shall Akom speak with him? He rides close by the hut where Akom lives concealed. He reins in his horse, and surveys the scene for a long moment. "Ah," he mutters, "what can a tiny spot like this have to tell?" And he shrugs his shoulders, and rides away. Akom remains silent. As his foster brothers look up at the hill inquiringly, he simply shakes his head. No, this leader is not the true heir to Attila's heritage. Akom must still wait.

He waits and waits, and centuries pass by. And steadily, faithfully, his hand carves upon the sacred cedar tree the events looming ever nearer. Outside, the throngs of men swarm ceaselessly over the land from distant Asia. All these peoples, more or less related, swarm about Akom's simple hut and some of them do not utterly disappear. Among such are the Kazars, Bulgars, Serbs and, closely following the others, the Utugurs, Bessenynos and Kutugers. All these are curious to know about Attila and of his

sacred heritage. They are brothers, after all, and marvel at the legend they have learned.

Are not even these guardians of the coming heir? Sacred Akom, must you still remain silent? When, then, will the true heir come? And Akom whispers to himself, "Ah, he is coming. I think I see him. He is approaching. These words have been spoken to me, and them have I carved on the cedar tree: 'Not the ten Ugors, not the thirty, not the nine. These are not the true ones. Neither are the five nor the six. The genuine heirs number seven stocks, seven tribes.' And the seven are coming. I feel it. The sacred drum announces it. They will soon arrive."

Still months, years and cycles pass. And on a fragrant morning of loveliest spring, the fraternal peoples are awakened by the mighty beating of the magic drum. While they are preparing to sally forth, Akom puts on festal raiment and, as if mad, razes to the earth his poor, miserable, obscure little hut.

They are coming! They have now reached the Alps. They will be here at any moment. The sacred cedar tree shall receive the oncoming chosen people beneath the free, glad sun of the Heavenly Father and in the broad bosom of the Earth Maiden.

The little beggarly band of kindred folk experience a fever of anticipation. They behold the evolution of battles in the wavering yet faithful images cast by the mirages flickering above the great steppe. In this wise they behold the conquerors pouring toward them, over the wide plain. Akom throws wide his arms, and smiles. "I am calling them," he says.

Now the portentous moment, awaited for five hundred years, has come. The sacred cedar tree is standing erect at the site of the old sanctuary on the little hillock. Akom the Eternal approaches it, his eyes shining with joy as he looks down upon the thousands and thousands of Magyars who swarm forth upon the plain, brandishing their bloody swords. In the fore are seven leaders, and in the first rank of all appears the son of Almos, clad in a steel shirt, gold-enameled, and in a noble and glittering suit of armor.

He looks fixedly at the sage, who wears the mantle hung

with bells. The knight standing beside him points to Akom. "It is he, my Prince. There stands Akom, Akom the Eternal. It is he who hath called us hither." Akom nods assent. "Yes. I, Edom, the son of Csabas, have been calling thee for fifteen generations of the children of men, my Prince. I have been waiting for the sacred events to be realized in verities. I have been keeping for thee thy heritage, left thee by thy ancestor Attila."

"And I am come only to win a home for myself!" declared the Prince.

"To win it back!" announces Akom, raising high his voice. "For on this sacred cedar tree you may read your title. I transfer the tree to you, and with it the land which was the land of Attila. Receive this tree, and from it let float aloft thy banner, in place of Attila's high blazon!"

The son of Almos leaps from his horse, raises his vizor and reverently approaches the hillock. Embracing Akom, he kneels with him before the sacred tree. All his people spring from their saddles and gaze gladly and joyfully about them. For they have dreamed of this day in far-away Asia. Now they are truly on the site of the old Hunnivar, where the great lord had his seat! This is the moment of the Fulfillment! The Prince reads the sacred inscriptions. All peruse together the carven testimony, which shows so many prophecies which have long since become realities, known of all men. They read, read, down to the very inscription foretelling the present moment! The Future has become the Present! And the son of Almos asks, "Is this the final prophecy?"

And Akom's countenance darkens as he answers, "Ah, demand not that of me now, O Prince! Ask me not that thing today, on this day of joy! Reserve thy question for another day!"

"Nay, nay, Akom, read thou the future, I must know all."

And Akom reads, sorrowfully and low, "And after these things, after three generations of men shall have passed away, the cousin of Arpad shall burn the holy tree of Attila. And then Akom shall cease, and yet Akom shall

still live." And Akom shows the Prince a writing where the prophecy stands forth.

The son of Almos fixes his gaze on the writing. Then he says, with a smile, "Perhaps thou art a false Akom, this time!"

"Ah, say not so, Prince," breaks in Akom, fearfully. "That is the thing which the great Attila himself said to me in his wild wrath! I vainly warned him twice, once before the dread Catalaunian field, and once before his fatal wedding. And I show thee also the future, only that thou mayest alter it through the divine grace and favor of God!"

The Prince turns to his people "In this place," he declares, "you shall build, under the protection of the forest god, Tapio, a sanctuary to enclose the sacred tree of our ancestor Attila. And a dwelling for Akom the Eternal shall likewise be built."

Months, years and generations still evolve. The sanctuary has been erected and Akom dwells near it. The Magyar races impart youth to him. He writes and carves no more, for the future has nothing further to reveal to him. He reads over the last of his prophecies, and counts the number of men who are related to the prince. And as he sits reflecting there one day, a great uproar arises. All the lesser sages hasten to him in alarm. "My Lord, our end has come! Enemies are approaching. They are Magyars, bear great lances, and from the points of the lances are hanging crosses."

Akom advances. A host of men, bearing torches and pikes are upon them. Through the smoky air appear the dark brown vestments of monks, who wear cords knotted about their waists, whose heads are shaven, and whose faces are those of fanatics. They look at Akom, and their looks reveal mingled pity and sternness.

"In the name of Christ our Lord, oh, pagan priest, forsake thy heathen deities! Reject them all, repudiate these infernal gods, and assume the religion of the only true God! Our noble King Stefan commands it!" The people with the pikes crowd closer and closer.

"Away! Away with these pagan, idolatrous pillars, the

last vestige of idolatry on the Christian soil of Hungary! Away with them all! They must be burned in the fire!"

Akom stands dumbly before the sanctuary door. Through the smoke, he perceives, through the serried ranks of the oncoming hosts a shining, golden crown and, beneath it, a thoughtful brow, and a long, sad, bearded face. It is the hostile king. Akom the Eternal regards him, exclaiming, "Woe, woe, the sacred privilege is here, alas, vain. The future cannot be altered. Yet, O King, do not permit this act which thy people demand. Do not destroy with fire all the great past of our ancestors and people, for in destroying its past, thou shalt destroy its future! Those of our race who follow us will not longer know their own people if this sacrifice be committed!"

But Akom is powerless to resist. A pike thrust at the door pierces his breast, and he falls to the ground. As he lifts his dying eyes, he beholds the cedar tree on fire and amid the flames is being consumed the magic drum, which beats out a last message, and then remains silent forever. The sacred tree, and the pillars of Attila, throw their flames far and wide as they hiss and roar. The sparks mount high in air and pour round about upon the earth, in fiery rain. The dying sage beholds the end of his beloved symbols, and his eyes glow with a last, lingering, light of love.

"Ah, vainly ye burn these things! I am dying. Akom the Eternal is no more. His days are finished. And yet shall I rise from the dead. My soul is flying far with these flying sparks, back to the earth, mother and origin of all! When countless tears shall water the earth, this soil of Attila, these millions of sparks shall be as seeds bringing forth fruit in this soil and in the souls of men. Even I shall exist in one of the last of these fiery seeds, and I shall fructify in human souls, who will heed my words, for they shall feel within them the truth that I am the very soul of their race. And thus shall I dwell ever with my people, as Akom, Akom the Eternal!"

THE TIGHT FROCK COAT

By LUIGI PIRANDELLO

PROFESSOR GORI was usually very patient with his old servant, who had faithfully discharged her duties in his service for nearly twenty years. On the day when he put on a certain coat, though, he lost all his patience and his customary graciousness quite vanished. ~~On that day even Heaven was against him.~~

The mere thought that anything of so little importance could violently upset such a soul as that soul of his, so far removed from all light and frivolous things and so surcharged with profound intellectual activities—the mere idea sufficed to irritate him severely. His irritation was increased by the reflection that this great soul of his could submit to the notion of putting on such a coat, prescribed by a highly stupid custom for certain festive occasions, serving only to delude life with a pretense of gayety and diversion. And such a coat, adorning that great body of his, that elephantine form of his, truly admirably adapted to vie with a hippopotamus or Heaven knew what prehistoric animal!

Fairly snorting with wrath, the professor glared savagely at his old servant, who, tiny and round like a human ball, was beaming happily at the sight of her very big master in that extraordinary gala coat, without even a thought, rascal that she was, of the mortification that the old, honest and very common furniture and the poor old wornout books must feel in that tiny room nearly swamped in disorder.

That wonderful coat, now, was no deliberate fancy conceived by Professor Gori. It never came out of *his* wardrobe. In fact, he had rented it. The merchant next door had sent his clerk with a whole armful of coats from which Professor Gori might make a selection. ~~And, with the~~ air of an arbiter *elegantiarum*, the clerk, with half-closed

eyes and complacent smile, had held up each specimen for examination, turning it about and showing off all its marvelous qualities, only finally to shake his false forelock with the comment, "*That won't do.*"

The professor snorted again and wiped the perspiration from his fine forehead. He had already tried on seven, eight, nine of those cursed coats, he didn't know how many, in fact. ~~Every one was a tighter fit than the one before.~~ What a horrible collar was this one, now, in which the professor felt himself choked clear out of breath! Why, the edges along the buttonholes were threadbare as they could be! What was this stiffly starched and pendent cravat, this queer necktie, which the professor confessed he knew no way of torturing into an acceptable knot! And this was the last coat of the lot!

The clerk, though, said, quite complacently, "Ah, here we are! The very thing. Couldn't be better!"

Professor Gori turned to ~~glower menacingly~~ at the old servant, to head her off from admiring the picture he made. Then he scrutinized the coat, specially sent, without doubt, by the merchant, ~~and then~~ demanded of the clerk, "Haven't you any others?"

"We only had twelve, and they are all here."

"This is the twelfth one, eh?"

"Yes, sir, it is the twelfth."

"Well, it is indeed just right!"

It was the tightest fitting one of the lot. The young clerk, choking down a smile, gravely admitted, "Oh, it's a little tight, perhaps, a very little tight, but it will do very well. If you'd just have a look in the mirror——"

"Thanks!" snapped the professor. "It's quite enough to make a show of myself to you and to my servant." So the clerk bowed with great dignity, with just the slightest inclination of his head, and went away, bearing the eleven other coats on his arm.

"Is it possible!" exclaimed the professor, with a furious growl and a menacing movement of his arm. He angrily regarded a perfumed note of invitation lying on the table, and felt renewed wrath. The invitation was for eight o'clock, at the bride's home, on the Milan Road. A

twenty minutes' walk, and it was already a quarter after seven!

Having accompanied the tailor's clerk to the door, the old servant reëntered the room. "Be quiet, now!" commanded the professor. "Help me to get this cravat tied."

"Gently, gently—the collar first," advised the old woman. And she set herself to work, after wiping well her trembling hands with her handkerchief. Silence reigned for all of five minutes. The professor, the room and everything in it seemed in a state of breathless suspense and expectation, as if the Last Day were imminent.

"Tied yet?" demanded the professor.

"Why—ah—nearly."

The professor leaped to his feet, shouting, "Let it go! I'll tie it. I can't stand anything more!"

Hardly did he get before the mirror, however, when the very thing happened which the poor old servant had feared would happen. The professor made himself a clumsy bow. But, in the act, the coat opened and fell again together in front and the professor turned round with the swiftness of a cat feeling something tied to her tail. And, as he made this sudden revolution, *r-r-r-ip* went the coat as the cloth beneath one of the armpits gave way in a frightful slash. The professor became almost insane.

"It's ripped—only ripped," assured the old servant, hastening to the rescue. "Take it off and I'll mend it."

"There's no time," yelled the exasperated professor. "I'll go as I am, to punish everybody. I won't shake hands with any one at all. Let me go!" He tied the cravat in a single, furious jerk, buried the damaged coat beneath his overcoat, and started on his way.

He would see this thing through, he supposed. It ought to please him, Heaven knew! There was to be celebrated, early that morning, the wedding of his former pupil and dearest friend, Cesara Reis, who, through him, was winning, in her wedding, her reward for so many sacrifices incurred during the interminable years she had been devoting to her studies.

As he went along Professor Gori reflected over the curious circumstances bringing about the wedding. Yes, yes. It

was indeed wonderful. How had it happened that that rich widower had chanced along to ask at the Institute if a governess couldn't be had for his children? And what, after all, was his name? Grimi? Griti? No, it was Mitri. That was it, Mitri, Mitri. Certainly, Mitri.]

And that was how the wedding was to happen. Poor Cesara Reis, orphaned at fifteen, had heroically supported her old mother, partly by her needle, partly by giving private lessons. She had finally obtained her teacher's diploma. He, Professor Gori, admiring her constancy and courage, had been able to secure for her a post at Rome, in the postgraduate school. Then he was sought out by this Signor Griti—

Griti, Griti. Why, of course. That was the name! Well, he had indicated Cesara Reis to this Signor Mitri. And then, in only a few days, here came the gentleman back, much perturbed, greatly embarrassed. Cesara Reis had refused his offer of governess, on account of her age, station in life and old mother. Of course she couldn't desert her mother. Most of all, though, she had not wished to incur the gossip so ready to drop from slanderous tongues. And with what a lovely voice, with what marvelous expressiveness had the little rascal made all these protestations!

A very pretty girl, Cesara. Her beauty was just the sort which pleased him most. It was a beauty on which protracted sorrow (a fine phrase, that, and worthy of Gori, professor of Italian)—yes, a beauty on which protracted sorrow had bestowed all the grace of the tenderest sadness, and had conferred a sweet and lovely nobility. Certainly this Signor Grimi—now that he thought of it, the professor felt confident that the name was Grimi—well, anyhow, this Signor Grimi couldn't help falling in love with Cesara as soon as he saw her. Such things always happened, it seemed. He had returned to insist on Cesara's acceptance three or four times, and all in vain. It was quite hopeless. And then he had prayed and implored Professor Gori to intervene, so that this lovely Signorina Reis, so beautiful, so modest and so virtuous, might become the second mother

of his children, since she wouldn't be their governess! Well, why not intervene?

So he had intervened, and results had been of the happiest, and Cesara had accepted the proposal. And now the wedding was to be celebrated at the expense of the groom's parents, ~~the parents of Signor~~ of Signor Grimi, or Griti, or ~~Missi~~, those parents who had opposed the marriage furiously! And they could all go straight to the devil! The big old professor concluded his reverie in a final burst of wrath.

He remembered, though, that it was correct in such cases to give the bride a bouquet of flowers. Cesara had begged him to be one of the witnesses, but the professor had suggested that if he accepted that request, he would be obliged to make Cesara a present worthy of her wealthy fiancé, and, alas, he was too poor to do so. The sacrifice required when he hired the gala coat would be quite enough, still, though, a bouquet, why, yes, he might at least provide that. And, with much embarrassment, Professor Gori sidled into a florist's shop and bought a large bunch of greenery in which were placed a very few blossoms, rather far apart.

When he reached the Milan Road, he saw in its depths a crowd of curious onlookers in front of the house where Cesara lived. He judged that he was late, and that the carriages for the bridal procession were all ready to start, and that that was why all these people were waiting there. So he hurried forward. Why did every one look at him like that? The torn coat was well hidden beneath the overcoat. Perhaps the lower part of it was sticking out somewhere. He looked below, and satisfied himself on that point. No, it was invisible. What was it, then? What had happened? Why was the front door standing halfway open?

The door porter, or ~~concierge~~, asked, ~~with a compassionate~~ air, "For the wedding, sir?"

"Yes. I have been invited."

"But—well, the wedding—in fact, there is no wedding."

"No wedding? How is that?"

"Why, the poor lady—the mother——"

"Dead?" demanded the stupefied Gori, staring at the door man.

"Last night, and very suddenly." The professor stood there as motionless as a post. Was it possible! The mother! Old Madame Reis!

And he cast a glance at the people gathered round, as if to read in their eyes confirmation of the incredible tidings. The bunch of flowers fell from his limp hand. He stooped down to pick it up, but felt the seam beneath his armpit and stopped, half erect. Oh, heavens, that frock coat! The wedding frock coat, now condemned to appear at a funeral! What should he do? Go in, dressed like that? Go home? Then, emboldened, he retrieved the bouquet and bore it to the doorway.

"If you please," he said to the man at the door, "I believe I will take it in myself." He entered the house, and started to run hastily up the stairway. He had mounted only a few steps, for, on gaining the little landing, curse his fortune! he was quite out of breath.

On entering the little parlor, he seemed to have caused, in the groups of people standing there, a sort of embarrassment or confusion, which was suddenly repressed, as if some one had hurriedly left the room as he came in, or as if an intimate and animated conversation had been abruptly interrupted.

Embarrassed himself, Professor Gori halted just inside the entrance, and looked about in perplexity. He felt astray, and almost as if he were surrounded by enemies. These people were all relatives and friends of the groom. That old lady there was his mother. Those two who appeared unmarried were perhaps a sister and a cousin. Gori bowed awkwardly. Oh, heaven, again that seam in the frock coat! And, curved forward as if his head were drawn back, Gori cast another glance round about, to assure himself that nobody had heard the ripping of that accursed seam below his armpit.

Nobody responded to his bow, for the sadness and gravity of the occasion permitted no salutations of the kind. A few persons, possibly intimate family friends, were grouped about a gentleman in whom Gori, with a sharp glance, thought he recognized the groom. Breathing a sigh of relief, he approached this person impressively.

"Signor Grimi——"

"Migri," corrected the gentleman.

"Yes, yes, Migri! I had just thought of it. I had been thinking Grimi, Mitri, Griti, and couldn't for the life of me remember Migri. Excuse me. I am Professor Fabio Gori, you know. I saw you in——"

"I beg your pardon," ~~said the other, looking coldly at the poor professor.~~ Then, as if remembering something, he added, "Ah, yes, yes. Gori, of course. Why, you must be the one—you're the creator, you're the cause, indirectly, of the marriage! My brother told me!"

"What? What? Excuse me. You're the brother, then?"

"Carlo Migri, at your service."

"Indeed you must please pardon me. What a resemblance, by Jove! Excuse me, Signor Gri—Migri, of course. But what a bolt, and right out of a clear sky! Well, I—to some extent—I might say indirectly—perhaps one may say I did contribute a little——"

Migri interrupted him with a wave of his hand, and the professor stopped his remarks. "Let me present you to my mother."

"It will be an honor, I'm sure."

So he was conducted to the old lady, who was so very fat that she half filled the couch on which she was sitting. She was dressed in black, and her woolly hair was covered by a sort of black bonnet, which framed a face which was flat, yellow and almost like parchment.

"Mother, here is Professor Gori. You remember, don't you? He's the one who made the match and brought about Andrea's marriage."

The old lady lifted her heavy, sleepy eyelids, opened one a little more than the other, and allowed Gori to behold her dull, oval, and almost visionless eyes.

"In fact, though," murmured the professor, bowing, and this time with due regard for that seam in the frock coat, "in fact, Madame, I—I didn't really bring it about—I simply——"

"Wanted to provide a governess for my grandchildren." The old lady completed the professor's explanation, with

a cavernous voice. "Very well. That's what you did, to speak exactly."

"Well, now," cried the professor, "knowing the merits and the modesty of Signorina Reis——"

"Oh, a perfect daughter-in-law, nobody can deny that," ~~abruptly conceded the old lady, closing her eyes again.~~

"We all regret very deeply today——"

"What a shock! Indeed, what a terrible blow," exclaimed Gori.

"Unless it were truly God's will," finished the old lady.

Gori looked at her. "A cruel fatality," he declared. And then, looking about the room, "Where is Signor Andrea?"

The brother replied, with ~~pretended indifference~~, "Why, I don't know! He was here a minute ago! Perhaps he's gone away to get ready."

"Ah!" exclaimed Gori, with a sudden sense of relief. "Then the wedding will go on just the same?"

"Well, no! What are you thinking of!" replied the old lady, shocked and offended. "Oh, Lord! With death in the house at the same time? O-o-o-h!"

"O-o-o-h!" echoed, with a wail, the two horrified maiden ladies.

"Why, I meant that my brother was getting ready to leave at once for Turin with his fiancée. Our paper mill is there, you know. He's very much needed."

"What—what—he'll go away—like this?" stammered Gori.

"It's necessary. If he doesn't go today, he will tomorrow. We have persuaded him to go. He mustn't stay here. It isn't prudent and it isn't proper."

"Especially for the girl, now that she's alone," added the mother, in her cavernous voice. "Evil tongues, you know——"

"That's it," said the brother. "And, then, business matters are pressing. ~~This marriage was——~~"

"Very precipitate," supplied one of the two maiden ladies.

"Well, a bit sudden," amended Migri, softening down the somewhat harsher expression. "This grave shock has occurred, like a real fatality, as if—of course the wedding

must be postponed, on account of the mourning—and—and—both parties will have time to think matters over.”

Professor Gori stood there dumb and silent. The irritation and embarrassment which all this talk caused him was precisely of the same nature as the unpleasant feeling due to that hidden seam beneath the armpit of his tight frock coat. The conversation seemed to him put together just as that torn cloth had been mended, and needed to be regarded with the same secret care for the rough and ready attempt at repair. Were the talk not carefully restrained, were it not composed with the greatest caution, there was danger that the hypocrisy below it would be revealed, and that these fine gentlemen would appear in their true characters, just as if the sleeve of that frock coat should suddenly come loose and leave evident the bare reality which existed.

For a moment the professor felt a need to escape from the oppressive atmosphere about him and from the curious sense of annoyance imparted, in his bewilderment, by the little white birds embroidered on the collar of the old lady's black dress. Every time he saw little white birds like those, he remembered, he knew not why, a certain Pietro Cardella, who used to keep a haberdashery shop in his home region, and who had an enormous tumor on his neck.

He was ready to snort aloud, but caught himself in time and only murmured, stupidly, “Well, well—poor little daughter-in-law!”

The reply was a chorus of commiseration for the girl. The professor suddenly felt stung to action and demanded, with much irritation, “Where is she? May I see her?”

Signor Migri indicated one of the doors of the parlor. “Out there, if you wish,” said he. And Professor Gori went out thither, furiously.

There, on a little white bed, stark and rigid, lay the body of Cesara's mother, wearing an enormous starched cap. As Professor Gori entered the room, he at first saw only the corpse. He was at the mercy of a growing irritation, he felt confused and bewildered, his head was going round and round. He felt that he could not allow the stupid

and cruel pettiness and meanness which were about him to pass unnoticed.

The rigidity of the poor, dead woman seemed a sort of adornment, as if she herself had assumed it and had placed herself on that bed, with her immense starched cap, to take to herself the ceremony which had been prepared for her daughter. Professor Gori was almost tempted to call to her, "You are on the wrong road, dear old friend of mine! This is no time for jests like these!"

Then, looking again, he saw Cesara Reis, who was sitting on the floor, her head on her knees, her face hidden. She was very near the bed where her mother was lying. She was no longer weeping, but seemed plunged in a stupor. Amid her disheveled black hair, here and there a lock appeared still enveloped in curl papers, placed there the evening before to prepare her hair for the wedding day.

In the face of that piety, even, Professor Gori felt something like contempt. He felt an overmastering impulse to draw the girl back to earth, to shake her free from her heavy torpor. She should not yield to a fate so iniquitously favored by the hypocrisy of those people in the next room! No, no! Everything was ready, everything was fully prepared. Those gentlemen yonder had come there, like himself, in frock coats, all dressed for the wedding. Well, a simple effort of the will would suffice to accomplish the necessary result. He would make that poor girl, lying prostrate on the floor, rise to her feet. Half-numbed, half-torpid, as she was, he would lead her, compel her, to finish this wedding ceremony and save herself from dire ruin. For it was perfectly clear to the professor that danger was menacing this girl's life, should she be deserted at this critical moment by those whose indifference to her fate had been so clearly revealed.

That necessary effort of the will which the professor had thought of would unmistakably oppose the wills of all those relatives yonder. And as Cesara, almost without moving her head, almost without lifting an eyelid, feebly indicated her mother's body with a feeble gesture of her limp hand, saying only, "You see, Professor!" the pro-

fessor felt a sudden relaxation of the tension which was binding him.

"Yes, my dear, yes!" he replied, almost with ~~asperity and an excitement~~ which astonished his former pupil. "But you must get up! Don't made me bend over, for I can't bend over. Get up! Yes, yes! You must do that for me!"

Without her own volition, but compelled by the professor's excitement, the girl shook off some of her torpor and looked blankly at the professor. "Why?" she inquired.

"Because, my dear girl—but get up, first of all. I tell you that I cannot bend over, God knows!" answered Gori.

Cesara rose to her feet. Again beholding her mother's body on the little bed, she covered her face with her hands and burst into violent sobs. She was amazed to find her arm seized, and to hear the professor's harsh and almost scolding tone, as he became more and more excited.

"~~No, no~~ No weeping just now. Patience, my dear girl! Look at me!"

She turned toward him, nearly overwhelmed, but her sobs were arrested and she wept only with her eyes. "How can you ask me not to weep?"

"You must not weep just now, because weeping won't do just now, not for you!" — ~~And the professor cut short her crying.~~ "You are almost alone, my dear, and you must help yourself. Do you understand what I mean? Now, now! This moment! Get a grip on yourself and take all your courage right into your two hands. Set your teeth and do just what I tell you to do!"

"But what, Professor?"

"First of all, take out those curl papers."

"Oh, God," groaned the girl, remembering again and lifting her trembling hand to her hair.

"Bravo, my dear," encouraged the professor. "That's right! Now go and put on your ordinary school dress. Then put on your little cap, and come with me."

"Come? Where? What are you saying?"

"To the City Hall, my dear girl."

"What do you mean, Professor?"

"I say, come to the City Hall. Come to the registrar's office, and then straight to the church. If your wedding

is to take place at all, it must take place at once. If you're not married now, you will be utterly ruined. You must know that! Do you see how I dressed myself up for you? See my frock coat! I'll be one of your witnesses, just as you wanted me to be. Leave your poor mother here. Don't think of her for awhile. It will be no sacrilege. Your mamma herself would wish it. Listen to me. Go and get dressed. I'll take care of the rest. Go, now, right away!"

"No, no. How can I?" wept Cesara, throwing herself upon her mother's bed and despairingly burying her head in her arms. "It is impossible, Professor! There's nothing left for me, I know. My fiancé will go away, he will not come back, he will leave me, but I can't, I can't!"

Gori did not yield an inch. He bent over to raise her and draw her away from the bed. But, as he extended his arm and braced himself with one foot, he exclaimed, "Nothing makes any difference. I'll be your witness with only one sleeve if I have to, but this wedding is going to occur today. Do you understand? Look me right in the eye! Do you really understand me? Don't you know that if you allow this moment to pass you are finished? Don't you know that you have not a soul to aid you? Must your dead mother be responsible for your ruin? Remember how she desired this marriage, poor thing! You're doing nothing wrong! Courage, Cesara! I am here. I will be responsible for everything. Hurry up, dress yourself, my dear girl, and lose no more time!"

(So saying, he led the girl to the door of her little chamber, urging her forward by the shoulder. Then he went back into the dead woman's presence, and, closing the door of that room behind him, he returned to the salon like a warrior.

"Hasn't the bridegroom come back yet?" The friends and relatives turned to look at ~~the sudden apparition,~~ astonished at the professor's imperious tone.

Signor Migri inquired, with pretended sympathy, "Does the poor young lady seem sick?"

"No, she feels exceedingly well!" replied the professor, firmly, looking Migri straight in the eye. "It gives me

pleasure to tell you all that I have succeeded in persuading her to conquer her grief and to bury it in her own heart. Now, we are all here together. Everything is ready. All that is necessary—let me speak, please—all that is necessary, is, to have one of you—you, if you please”—~~and he turned to one of the guests—~~“just get a carriage, drive to the City Hall, and tell the registrar there that——”

A sharp chorus, protesting violently, interrupted the professor at this point. Not a face but was scandalized, full of amazement, full and overflowing with horror and indignation.

“Let me explain,” ~~insisted the professor, dominating the roomful with his personality.~~ “Is there any reason why this wedding should not occur? Is there no reason save the bride’s sorrow? Now, if the bride herself——”

“But I! I! I will permit no such thing,” cried the old lady, ~~her voice still louder than Gori’s, and interrupting him with all her might.~~ “~~I shall not permit my son——~~”

“To do his duty and commit a good act?” demanded Gori, ~~completing the old lady’s sentence for her.~~

Migri, fairly pale with anger, strode up to the professor in defense of his mother. “You’ll mind your own affairs,” said he.

“Excuse me. I’ll mind these affairs,” promptly returned Gori, “and particularly because you are supposed to be a gentleman, my dear Signor Grimi.”

“Migri, if you please!”

“Yes, yes. Migri! And you’ll fully understand that it is neither fitting nor honest to allow such a situation as this to occur. It is necessary to be stronger than the sorrow which has overwhelmed this poor girl. She must be saved. Must she be left alone, helpless now and with no position whatever in the future? I tell you, No! This marriage is going to occur, in spite of her sorrow, in spite of—humph! We must have a bit of patience.”

The professor interrupted himself with a burst of wrath. He stuck one hand beneath the sleeve of his overcoat, seized the sleeve of his frock coat, tore it violently loose, drew it out with a furious gesture, and threw it into the

air. Everybody laughed involuntarily at this curious occurrence, wholly new and unexpected, while the professor gave a deep sigh of relief and continued, "And in spite of this damned sleeve that's been bothering me so much!"

"You are joking," observed Signor Migri.

"No, Signor. The thing had been sewed to my clothes."

"Joking, I tell you! Or else you are violent!"

"I'm just as violent as the case requires!"

"Aha, he's got an axe to grind. I tell you, that which you ask is impossible, as things are."

The bridegroom fortunately entered just at this point.

"No, no, Andrea, no!" Everybody was shouting at once, and from all parts of the room. But Gori anticipated them, and approached the man.

"Make up your mind. Here, let me tell you. I've persuaded the young lady to get the best of her sorrow, in view of the gravity of the situation in which you are leaving her, my dear sir. If you are willing, Signor Migri, no special preparations are necessary. We can drive to the City Hall in any carriage at hand and quickly have the wedding. You surely will not refuse, I hope! Tell me, and tell her——"

Andrea Migri, taken by surprise as he was, looked, first at Gori, then at the others, and at last replied, hesitating, "Why, so far as I'm concerned, if Cesara wishes——"

"She wishes it, she wishes it," cried Gori, his huge voice drowning the disapprobation of the others. "Here's a real word from the heart, at last! Come, then, sir, run down to the City Hall like a good fellow——" and he pressed the arm of the guest to whom he had first spoken, and walked with him persuadingly to the door. At this door he beheld a great many baskets of magnificent flowers, sent for the wedding, and hastened back into the parlor, to get the groom away from his venomous relatives, who were flocking about him.

"Signor Migri! Signor Migri! I beg you! See here!"

Migri hastened toward him. "We all know what this poor girl would like! All these flowers, for her mother!

Help me take them in." He seized two of the baskets and reëntered the parlor. Then he proceeded, directly and in triumph, to the room where the dead woman was lying. The bridegroom, repentant, followed him, bearing two more baskets. Everything was changed in a moment. Several of the guests hurried out, seized baskets for themselves, and a regular procession of the flower-bearers was formed straightway.

"Flowers for the dead; wonderful! Flowers for the dead."

A few moments later, Cesara appeared in the parlor. She was very pale, in her modest, black, school dress, her hair scarcely held in place, and she was trembling all over with the effort she was making to control herself. Suddenly her fiancé ran toward her, seized her in his arms, and passionately clasped her to himself. Sudden silence fell upon the room. Professor Gori, his eyes full of tears, quietly left the room with three of the guests, to follow the two lovers and to sign the marriage register.

The groom's old mother, the brother, ~~the two maiden ladies~~, and the guests remaining in the room now gave full vent to the indignation which they had smothered for a moment at sight of Cesara. It was indeed fortunate that Cesara's poor dead mother, lying there amid the lovely flowers, could not hear those worthy folk in their worthy condemnation of the gross lack of reverence for the dead so miserably occurring!

Professor Gori, however, thinking as he walked along, of what those who were left behind must be saying about him in the parlor, arrived at the City Hall so dazed that he seemed drunk. Utterly forgetting the sleeve which he had torn from his frock coat, he took off his overcoat.

"Why, Professor!"

"Oh, the devil!" The professor was furious with himself.

Cesara couldn't help a wan smile. But Gori, who had been trying to console himself with the thought that he should never see these people again, did not laugh at all, for he suddenly remembered that he would have to go and get that sleeve, so that he could return sleeve and

coat to the merchant from whom he had rented the garment! And then, his signature! As a witness, he had to sign!

When the church ceremony, ~~so essential for full accomplishment of the marriage~~, had been quickly finished, the newly married pair and their four witnesses went back to the bride's house. They were greeted with glacial silence. Gort tried to make himself as small as possible, took a peep into the parlor and then, turning to one of the guests, whispered close into his ear, "Er—would you mind getting my sleeve for me that I threw away in the room there a little while ago?"

And, as he went softly away, a few moments later, carrying the sleeve wrapped up in a newspaper, he reflected that, after all, he owed his conquest of fate to the sleeve of that selfsame tight frock coat he had so much detested. For had not that same frock coat, with the sleeve sewed up beneath the armpit, so irritated him, he would certainly, in the upset condition produced by the disturbance of his quiet, regular and monotonous existence, have accepted the shock of that unexpected fatal event without a murmur, like an imbecile, and with an inertness which would have allowed that poor girl to remain forever unhappy. By the grace of God, though, he had obtained the courage and strength to rebel and to conquer, and from the very irritation caused him by his tight frock coat!

SIGNOR GIACOMINO'S LITTLE SLIP

By ADA PETTINI

THE great clock on the massive tower rising high above the municipal palace standing at the entrance of the old Italian town struck the hour slowly with its huge, deep-toned bell. It was eight o'clock in the evening. The sound rolled, echoing, out into the valley where the last gleams of daylight were fading away. Its vibrations seemed to remain prolonged in the subdued chattering of swallows already returned to their nests for the night, while all the electric lights suddenly shone forth together in the narrow streets winding between the dark, high buildings of the place. Here and there, gleamed the small shops where groceries and food could be purchased, and the marketplace and windows of the town were alight. A few moments later all the church bells, great and small, announcing supper-time, resounded, now near at hand, now far away, with peals first strident and sharp, and then with tones more deep and muffled. A tremor of life ran along the principal roadway, from one end to the other. This was the Via Alberghi, and all the big double doors which lined it were now open, allowing the evening breezes to rustle at each one and to bear away with them the warm, soft, mild and tempting odors from the most delicate kitchens which one could imagine.

An automobile now arrived. Throbbing, pulsing, it filled the street with its nauseous vapors, and stopped in front of the Garelli *pension*, one of the most popular hostleries in the town. The persons descending from the car, mingled with others who had loitered up, formed a group whose murmurs resounded confusedly together. Then, with greetings and words of hasty appointment for the morrow, the single group divided. Some of its components wandered toward the Flora Inn, others to the Bellavista, while

a good many entered the big Garelli house, which was bright with lights and gay with flowering plants.

The prospect of dinner banished the readers from the reading room and interrupted the games of checkers and cards, begun as a means of forgetting the heat of the July day. That prospect produced many sighs of relief, for now everybody would be assembled around the good table and could for a few moments forget fatigue, pain, distress and the other annoyances incident to the place, which was a famous hydro-mineral resort sought out by all sorts of people for all sorts of diseases.

In five minutes more, the tower clock repeated the eight slow and deep bell strokes. It was answered by prolonged peals resounding in every key from the clocks of all the hostelries about and, when the bells of the simpler houses had ceased, that of the aristocratic Grand Hotel, which lay in large grounds outside the town, echoed through the town in prolonged and distant tones. A few people straying late at the close of the warm afternoon, and here and there a little chamber-maid, in white apron and starched cap, hastened along the street and then all activity ceased. All the big double doors were closed, and only silence reigned throughout the main highway, now left in peace.

In his room on the second floor of the Garelli *pension* Signor Giacomino Franchi, a type of scrupulous exactitude, of modest elegance and of methodical ways, was turning about to view himself in his mirror. He was ex-vice-librarian of the Ministry of Marine and had been visiting the Garelli *pension* for the last ten years, where he drank the mineral water and took his shower bath every morning. Now his hair was brushed to perfection, his tie knotted impeccably, and his gray suit had not a single untidy fold in it. Very good. Signor Giacomino stuck a flower in his buttonhole, moistened his handkerchief in *eau de cologne*, imparted a final polish to his nails and gave a touch of the brush to his little beard, which had very few white hairs in spite of the signor's fifty years. Everything was quite complete. Signor Giacomino stepped to the door of the next room and called, "Nora!"

"In a moment," replied a very sweet contralto voice.

"Hurry up!" admonished the signor. "The second bell has rung and we have scarcely three minutes. Please don't be late, Nora."

"Well, dear Uncle, they won't carry off all the food for a matter of only three minutes, will they?" said Nora, without opening her door. "You must remember that I have arrived after a ten-hour journey. I was fairly black with smoke and dust. I don't want you to go down without me. Does it annoy you, Uncle Giacomino, to enter the dining room while the others are eating?"

"Oh, all right, all right, only hurry." And Signor Franchi began to walk up and down with light, small steps, like those of a nervous little woman. In fact, it was annoying to the very exact signor to be late. He affected the Garelli house for the precise reason that Signora Euphemia, its respectable proprietress, ran her establishment by the clock. To enter the dining room after the meal was begun and present himself with his newly arrived niece, would be, for him, no easy thing.

Signor Giacomino had always been a very timid man. His terrible timidity, which had made him miserable as a child, and unhappy as a youth, still tormented him, in spite of his graying hair. On account of that timidity of his he had failed at his examinations, lost all his competitions and had been beaten in his occupation by those who were deceitful and dishonest. He had been too timid to marry, and his weakness made him admire the bold. Perhaps it was his timidity which made him especially fond of Nora, the oldest of the orphaned children of his only brother and Giuditta. Yes, of Giuditta, as Signor Giacomino still called her in his heart of hearts. He still burned at the well known name, even after many years, for Giuditta should have been—oh, well, it was an old story, now, and well buried. And yet the arrival of Nora, whom he had not seen since she was a child and who was now a young lady very like her mother, had produced a sort of psychologic storm in the signor's quiet life, a storm composed of whirling memories and regrets.

"Nora, Nora, come along!"

"I'm ready!" And, framed by the open door, there stood the young girl, fresh and blooming. She was not exactly pretty, but perfect health was reflected from her calm and placid face, swelling breast, the full hips within the tight-fitting skirt of blue serge, the well formed neck left partly revealed by the white jacket, and the fine curly head, whose pretty coiffure had been composed with a negligence which was all art.

Signor Franchi prepared to descend to the first floor, preceding his niece and hoping that dinner would be just a trifle late. But in the bright dining room all the guests were already seated about the horseshoe-shaped table, which was adorned with flowers and bore the typical Tuscan carafes distributed at regular intervals. And tiny Signora Euphemia, clad in black and with her pale face surrounded by a halo of blond and silky hair, was directing with her eyes the perfect service performed by the two waitresses dressed in white caps and aprons, who flitted about silently as they brought in the bowls of smoking-hot soup.

The signor hesitated. Then, taking courage, he resolutely entered the room and included all the guests in a sweeping greeting with his hand. People bowed to him here and there while curiosity, aroused by the new arrival, caused a momentary break in the general talk. Signora Euphemia conducted the young girl to her place at the table and then the chattering began again on all sides.

"The chevalier has company tonight!" The guests called Signor Giacomino the chevalier because of his politeness. "Oh, she's his niece." "Lovely girl!" "Lovely? Hardly, but she's very nice." "She's a daughter——" "His brother's child, not his." "The chevalier is a bachelor." "Hardened and hostile to women?" "Victim of an unlucky love affair?" "I like that girl." "She's a teacher in a Turin college, finely educated and very solid and serious."

Signor Giacomino felt ill at ease. To assure his niece a good place at table, he had yielded his to her and had a new one for himself, forsaking the post he had occupied for so long. This old place of his was ideal. It was at the end of the table, and permitted him to slip away the

very first instant a meal was finished, and without disturbing any one. On this evening, now, he found himself on the right hand of a new lady guest, a respectable matron whose face was red and freckled, and who wore an enormous blond wig intended to simulate fine blond hair. This person complained all the time, said she was uncomfortable, berated the heat, criticized the menu, chattered to the signor first of one thing, then of another, and, seeing that he politely regretted his inability to foresee everything she wanted, she smiled upon him to encourage and thank him, and was beginning to talk about her ill health and sufferings. She had come to the place to be treated for her terrible gallstone colic. She had traveled to foreign countries for it, without achieving anything. And she told him all about the very first attack, giving an abundance of details. It had occurred on a day when the weather was perfectly villainous, that first colic, and it seemed to have been preceded by pain here, and pain there——

"Eat, my dear, you must eat something—excuse me for not helping you better," murmured Signor Giacomino, when he could slip in a word, and casting at his niece a rapid glance of great discomfort, as he hurriedly spoke to her.

"Oh, don't mind me, Uncle, I am amusing myself very much." And Nora took in the scene around her. She was somewhat bewildered, what with her long journey and the new surroundings. She glanced curiously at all these people, so differing in appearance and manner, in family and origin, who were assembled under the same roof and gathered at the same family table, and who had one common ground, in spite of all their differences—the ground of sickness and suffering.

Yes. Nora beheld pale, exhausted faces in which the lamplight and pleasant warmth of the room, the delicious food and wine, utterly failed to arouse animation. She saw pale, thin hands resting on the spotless tablecloth. There were shiny heads, prematurely bald, seeming like whitish masks against the bright pink walls, painted with frescoes, and there were faces, hardly disfigured yet by early disease, which were still bright with the surety of be-

ing able to struggle and win out against the slowly advancing malady.

Nearly every one talked of good times gone by, times when health was good, times when the insidious disorders had not yet appeared. Nearly every one was interested in his own difficulties and rejoiced to know that others had suffered or were suffering, also. All had come to seek from the marvelous waters of the place strength to live a little better, or a little less badly, than they had been living. Every one scrupulously followed, in utter obedience, their medical prescriptions, their faith absolute and ingenuous, or else manifesting the pessimism induced in them by a prolonged, fruitless struggle.

Over there was a big man who must have made his fortune in business, because he talked of the stock exchange, big establishments and millions. He wore an enormous brilliant in his tie and a magnificent diamond ring on his finger, which was oddly deformed by the gout. He talked very loudly and his jests were sometimes vulgar. His wife, a fat little woman, glittering with gold and precious stones, kept him in check with warning glances.

Over toward the center was a suave priest, full of compliments and evidently at home in society, who talked to everybody as he turned his head right and left with graciousness and charm. Near him was a languid lady whose face bore the signs of a terrible malady, but who was luxurious in the silks and laces about her still supple figure. She ate very little, smiled discreetly at the priest's remarks, and allowed herself to be stared at by an elegant young man sitting opposite to her.

The young man talked well, slightly raising his head and very fine dark eyes as if finding inspiration in the act. The talk indicated that he was a man of law and aspiring to some electoral post. Besides, he was greatly interested in politics and elections. He was replied to by a noble Sicilian senator, in a manner admitting of no contradiction. The honorable senator's face was fat and pale and every one listened when he spoke, even the suave priest.

There appeared an aristocratic couple. The wife had the washed-out, listless face accompanying sterility and was

dressed very carelessly. The man's face was still vigorous and his glance acute. He was all solicitude for his desolate companion of a life in which the only thing missing was a child. Farther along, there were a couple typical of perfect affection. The young husband was prematurely old from suffering, and his pretty little wife smiled at him continually, to divert him and make him also smile. He replied a trifle wearily, but often pressed his wife's hand and looked tenderly into her eyes.

Typical provincials were not lacking. There were wealthy country people, dressed up for the occasion in tailor-made clothes. The hands of the men revealed the farmer, or the cattle raiser, and their faces showed shyness of their surroundings.

The servants trotted here and there without ceasing. They served the chicken, the sausage, the grill, the dessert, and never ceased being elegant and gracious. They pretended not to hear the somewhat coarse expressions uttered by some wornout old man, who was very fond of his food and whispered to them when they served him.

Nora could see again the long, disorderly table in the orphanage, where she had been placed after her father's death and where she had remained, as teacher, after her mother died. Now her uncle had invited her to take a little rest from the fatigue of her teaching, and to enjoy fresh, country air, while he was taking the treatment, as usual, at the resort. Nora thought of the unkempt table, the cotton tablecloth, the numbered napkins, the cheap glasses, the coarse tin plates, all laid hastily on the table.

She viewed herself retrospectively, a humble, assistant teacher, seated at the end of the long table, eating but little of very poor food, partly because she was obliged to oversee the children. She could almost smell the sickish odor of the bacon soup, the peculiar one which is commonly perceptible in an assembly of poor school children, and the subtle flavor imparted by fustian and coarse shoes. She threw a glance of gratitude toward her uncle, who had brightened her simple existence with the luxury of this fine *pension*. Her uncle appeared absorbed in the account of the red-faced lady's hepatic colic.

Ah! Nora was not sick, and wanted to enjoy life a little; to enjoy the sensation of being served, of eating well, and of being looked at, not as she had been looked at so long in the gloomy orphanage, but as the only healthy young woman present in a roomful of sick people. She tasted the pleasure of being curiously looked at by the old, honorable, Sicilian senator, and enjoyed the paternal glance of the suave priest. She reveled in the sense of enjoying herself in the midst of the suffering, in the feeling she had of being perfectly well, young and strong, and in allowing herself to dream of being wealthy and of being no longer obliged to gain her livelihood by teaching in an orphanage.

The dinner finally ended. Signora Euphemia disappeared. The servants slowly began to clear the table and to serve coffee to those who wanted it, flitting here and there, and replying to the jokes and badinage. Uncle Giacomino had risen. Oh, oh! He was offering his arm to the red-faced lady. Nora noticed that the lady was not old, in spite of her blond wig, and smiled at her uncle, whose ears were actually purple. Everybody went down into the parlor on the ground floor, to play games, gossip and listen to a little music, if any one should chance to provide it. Nora could play the piano and played a march which gave the orphans rhythm for their gymnastics. The march had a very good effect, and Nora was loudly applauded. The lady in the blond wig came to shake hands with her. "It was lovely, that nocturne. It touched me. It reminded me of moonlight nights, when my liver was not affected." And then the lady presented her sister, a Countess Cenni, a dark little woman, rather thin, but full of dignity. They were there rather for preventive treatment of their nephew than for themselves.

The nephew came forward. Nora looked wonderingly at this being, a youth of uncertain age, somewhere between fifteen and twenty years, to judge from his beardless, freckled face crowned with long, stiff and reddish hair. The boy's shoulders were round and his chest hollow. He said a few words in a rather feeble voice and sat down near the piano, looking at his respectable aunts with a glance of inquiry. "Yes, dear," said the "red aunt," "talk a

little with this nice young lady and amuse yourself a bit before bedtime"; and the "black aunt" assented, with a grave nod. The boy obeyed orders and talked. He talked of his fear of a future disease. He knew of nothing else, thought of nothing else, was interested in nothing else. He was the spoiled child in a rich family, where every one died of some disease of the liver. He was the only son of an only brother, who was also deceased. They called him "the little count," and that did not offend him. And he hunched himself together as he spoke, to make himself still smaller.

Nora looked at him from the heights of her seat at the piano, her bust erect and head drawn back a little, forming a marked contrast to the poor bent body before her, afflicted with suggestions of disease which did not exist, but which might occur. She did not know whether it was worth while to pity the boy, or whether, after all, it might not be better to laugh at this queer being, so unfortunately surrounded by grown-ups and old people.

He asked her, incredulously, "Are you really not sick at all? Not even a little bit? Are you here only to have a rest? Are you here for the air, and not for the waters? And you don't know what cramps and hepatic colic are? You've never felt that sharp pain near the shoulder? Never? All the folks at home have, and I felt it myself when I was twelve, and now I'm twenty-one."

"Poor young man," thought Nora.

"What are you going to do," asked the little count, "if you don't take the mineral water treatment?"

"Why, I'll take walks, I'll climb the hills, I'll go to see the sun rise, and I'll walk in the moonlight, just as you can do yourself."

"I'm afraid. I'm delicate. My aunts won't let me. And then, the humidity of the evening is very bad for you. It will make even you sick."

"Me? Nothing ever makes me sick!"

"Lucky, lucky girl!" And the little count cast upon Nora a look full of admiration and mute desire, and then glanced sidewise at his two aunts, "You're lucky," he repeated. "Let me take your hand and you'll give me some

of your strength." Nora, with some distaste, felt a cold and sticky hand in her soft and warm one. "Will you," said the little count, "will you take a walk with us tomorrow? At a good time, you know. I am sure that that will be amusing. There are no girls here, and I get tired of my aunts. Then if it rains," and he crept closer, like a frightened rabbit, "won't you come into the parlor and play some games with me? I have a beautiful game, all made of ebony and ivory. I've got lots of books, too, but they're about travels and voyages, and I'm sick of them."

"Oh, yes, yes indeed!" Nora broke into an irrepressible laugh, a laugh so youthfully gay and fresh that it attracted the attention of every one. From the rather dark corner where they were flirting, the man of law and the elegant lady looked wonderingly at Nora. And so also did the trio at the table—the Honorable, the Aristocrat, and the Ecclesiastic.

"What a superb girl," thought the Honorable. "Oh, to have a daughter like that," groaned the Aristocrat within his heart; and the Ecclesiastic suddenly lowered his head, as he thought of the punishment inflicted upon him by his calling. The "red aunt" ceased her chatter long enough to permit Uncle Giacomino to mutter to himself, "How glad I am that I invited her! The little girl will amuse herself a little. Oh, how happy poor Giuditta would be if she could see it!"

"Bravo! Splendid! It's useless, it's a waste of time to play tennis with you!" And the lawyer received Nora's last service, only to miss his return and throw down his racket as he hastened toward the automobile which was to take the last party of the day to the Big Baths. Nora, in her tennis costume of pleated white cotton, which she had made herself in a few days, and wearing a red silk cap over her dark hair, seemed to have acquired a new loveliness as she flushed and panted from the game she had won.

Since her arrival a breath of youth had penetrated into the somewhat somber circle of the Garelli *pension*. Tennis had taken on new life, people now thought of dancing in the evening, and guests from other hostels came to the Garelli,

attracted by the idea of amusing themselves, and a fine quadrille had even been finally accomplished in the parlor on the ground floor, every one discovering, with surprise, that the chevalier Giacomino Franchi danced! Yes, he really danced, and with the red Countess Cenni, who was quite aglow with the feat of having conquered the timid chevalier. He, in turn, seemed actually intoxicated by the encircling sympathy thrown about him by the freckled and very mature lady. The little count did not dance, but, like a circus factotum, ran here and there, helping, working, and fairly sewn to the dress of Nora, who commanded him with a wave of her finger. Both aunts were now quite willing to confide their little Saint Luigi to her, and wherever Nora's shadow was seen, the face of the little count was seen glowing within it.

In fact, the little count, hardly free of the automobile that morning, had come to seek Nora, enveloped as he was in the shawl which the two careful aunts had insisted on his carrying with him.

"Signorina, Signorina," almost wept the youth, "why didn't you come to the spring this morning? Won't you come and take a walk with me? I'm lonely and sick of all this."

But Nora, in a joyous mood, replied, shrugging her shoulders, "Well, if you are sick of it all by yourself, I don't want to be sick of it too, with you!"

"Oh, oh!" said the boy, almost in his former tone. "Don't go away, please be nice, stay with me a little while, don't go off and leave me!"

"I believe," said Nora, making her eyes very round, "that I must tell you what I really think. You ought to throw away your shawl and blankets and all that. After the bath you ought to play tennis with us, run, walk, move about, and get up a real reaction. You—you make me feel bad and you make me laugh," she confessed, softening her voice and eyes. "You're just a child. As a man you're a joke. And, most of all, you only think you're sick. Be a little lively! Don't complain all the time, don't think of sickness that may come but that you are quite free from now. You are sick because of too much coddling, too

much treatment. Come and walk with me if you wish to, since the aunts are willing, and you'll feel better and you'll eat better after it, I assure you. What a poor life yours is! Aren't you ashamed of it? Don't you regret the time that passes like this, all devoted to pills and plasters? You are sick because of your fears. You are afraid of your own shadow. Come, be a man! If I were in your place I'd make up my mind either to live a real life, or else die. Look out at the world, and throw away this burden of fear. Cast loose from your aunts' skirts. Be a young man, not a baby!"

The boy stood up straight, let the shawl drop to the ground, and, with his eyes wide and fixed as if awaking from a long dream, he murmured, "I'll try it, I'll try it!" And he fixed upon Nora a strange glance from his gray eyes, full of admiration.

"You'll really try it?" she demanded, looking him full in the eye.

"Oh, I know, I know," he said, in a low, sad voice. "I know that all their treatments have made me what I am. I am unhappy. I am supposed to live as all my family have. I am supposed to have the family heredity. Everybody wants to save me with a lot of treatment, just as all the family always tried to save those who died. The doctors tire me, torment me and kill me, instead of making me well. But I feel that I can be quite different. Oh, Signorina Nora, I am unhappy. Do not forsake me, don't make fun of me, help me to make my life over! Give me some of your will power, your energy, your vitality!"

She listened to him, almost not believing that she really heard these sad and vehement words. She beheld the youth as if transfigured by his sincere burst of mental pain, and by a strange expression of desire which gleamed from his eyes as from a flame. "Oh, yes!" he continued, throwing the shawl far away from him and sitting down near Nora on the little bench there, as Nora took his hands in hers. "Yes, I shall find the strength to reconstruct my life if you don't despise me and if you'll help me." And his face assumed an humble expression of entreaty.

"Despise you? Why? Aid you, most willingly!" re-

plied the young girl, feeling a constraint which she could not explain. "Every one must encounter difficulties and meet them with courage. I am twenty-five years old, and I know what it is to struggle. I have had to make my own living and support my two little sisters. My work has been tiring, painful, often dry and uninteresting and poorly paid. It has lasted for years, and may last all my life. It is monotonous and never changes, and, if I had not reacted against it, it would have consumed all my energy, all my gayety and all my ideals. I am strong because I must be strong."

"But why do you fatigue yourself like this?" asked the youth, still looking at the young girl with mingled curiosity and shyness.

"Why? To be independent. To know that I can live by my own efforts. And because my sisters are still small and have need of me." Nora was speaking, but the young man was no longer listening. He was thinking of those energetic words he had just heard, of the frank expression of commiseration and of the wise counsels which had almost frightened him. "Be a man," Nora had said. Why not, in fact, free himself from his solicitous aunts, why not rebel at all this stupid medical treatment, why not look about him, why not enjoy life, why not behold, with really open eyes, this gay, blooming, healthy young woman who had talked with him? Why not embrace her and give her a kiss full on the mouth, in a real human burst of desire and passion? Why not enjoy life for himself, as all youths of his age did, who had drunk from the cup of love with eager lips? And if—and if—at the thought he reddened, trembling at the soft contact with the girl's hair so lightly brushing across his forehead and at the touch of her hand—if he should become perfectly well and strong, would Nora have him if he should fall in love with her? And he approached more closely to her, as if to divine her reply. Nora drew back, blushing. "I did not intend to speak out like this," she said, her voice in a tremble. "I have said too much, perhaps. I only wanted to speak a bit of your manner of living, advise you to have a little pleasure in life——"

"But I," interrupted the young man, "I know what the only really fine thing in men's lives is. I have been kept a prisoner, but I know that I can love and be loved like every one else. You are the only one, though, who can aid me and rescue me. Rescue me for good, Nora, by loving me. Some day I shall be rich, and can make you my wife. Don't despise me, but have pity on me, for you are beautiful, strong and good, and I am unhappy."

Nora, who felt herself powerless to reply, felt her heart beating wildly. He would be rich some day and could make her his wife. Oh! if she need not return to that gloomy college and spend there the last days of her youth! Oh! To love and be loved! Was she dreaming! Was she merely intoxicated by her journey, by the *pension*, so different from her other dwelling, by repose and by companionship? Was she really sitting near the tennis court and left alone with a man who kneeled at her feet and kissed her hands and garments? Yes, this was you, really you, Nora, and the memory of the orphanage was already very far away, far away with the sadness of your humble, weary life. There before her was the fairy prince of childish fable, ready to deliver her, with a single word, from the fatal enchantment cast upon her. He was saying, "Nora, Nora, love me and I shall get well!"

She trembled and rose to her feet. "What shall I do? What people may not be looking at us? What about those two aunts?"

The young man answered faintly, "My aunts? They'd have to accept the situation. This afternoon, at three o'clock, when everybody is resting, come out on the terrace. You must come, for I have many things to tell you. You must come."

"Many things to tell me? Very well." And Nora promised that she would come at three o'clock.

It was the last infernal evening of a very stormy March. There were wind, rain, hail. Signor Giacomino Franchi, seated before the dining table all ready for the meal, felt very warm in his indoor clothes, smoked his pipe contentedly, and smiled to himself. In the mounting spirals

of smoke he saw many faces. Little Signora Euphemia led the procession. Then came the suave ecclesiastic, the honorable senator, the elegant advocate and, finally, the red Countess Cenni. Oh! She was the very one who had thought she had conquered him. Why, she was an old maid, crazy to get married! And he, to think that he could marry at fifty-two! Well, well! And then he saw Nora's face, that dear girl, who had gained every one's affection.

There was a ring at the bell. Why, who could be coming, at nine o'clock at night, clear to the foot of Manzoni Avenue, to seek Signor Giacomino? Ah! a telegram. With sudden anxiety the chevalier thought of his distant niece, from whom he had had no word for a long time. The telegram was, in fact, from Nora and announced her arrival that very night on an urgent matter. Urgent matter? Nora, traveling from Turin without any other notice than this? And the telegram had been sent from Orvieto. What was this mystery?

The signor had but little time to cogitate. There was the sound of a carriage at the big front door, the bell rang again, and Signor Giacomino hastened forward. Nora, Nora! He could scarcely recognize her, so closely wrapped was she in a huge gray cloak, her face hidden by a black veil. He attempted to embrace her, but she drew back, saying, "Excuse me, Uncle, I am dripping with rain. What frightful weather! I am so tired! No, no——" she turned to Matilda, the old and faithful maid who was trying to draw off her cloak—"leave it alone, I am so cold. I want a refuge for only one night, Uncle. Oh, if you only knew!"

She grasped his arm and drew him into the little dining room. "I am ill," she said, lowering her voice. "I have to submit to an operation. I haven't told you before because I hoped to stay at a friend's house in Florence. My friend cannot receive me, and at Turin I didn't want to, I couldn't let any one know I was sick on account of my position in the college and on account of my sisters—only for one night, Uncle. I'll go away tomorrow, at daylight, to some hospital, I suppose——"

Uncle Giacomino's ears are red and he still holds his pipe in his hand, but he has forgotten to smoke, forgotten to put his pipe down. "My dear girl, what is the matter with you? Why didn't you let me know? Where do you intend to go? I know it isn't easy here, but we can make arrangements—my room is very large, and I can sleep in Matilda's room."

"Matilda! Get the bed ready for the Signorina. Are you hungry, poor Nora?"

Nora sat down, out of breath. She raised her veil. She was very pale and each eye had a dark circle below it. "No, no, I only need rest. I shall soon be better, and can go away tomorrow morning."

"Why, you poor thing, you must stay here. Go right away to bed, and we'll have a doctor tomorrow. Have you a—tumor?" Signor Giacomino's voice was low. "Your poor mother had one—but you can be treated in time!"

"Ah, yes, yes—perhaps——" big tears were falling from Nora's eyes. "I shall soon be well. And I won't need anything tonight, I hope, since tomorrow—thank you, Matilda!" She went away to her room. And Signor Giacomino and Matilda remained alone, looking at each other in amazement. Poor little thing! What a state she was in! They would see about this, tomorrow.

But, at two o'clock in the morning, Matilda tapped softly at the door of the signor's room. "Signor, Signor, the signorina must be very sick. She's groaning dreadfully and says to call a doctor right away." The signor leaped out of bed, dressed himself, and went out. A night pharmacy was open in the Victor Emmanuel Square, and a doctor could certainly be had at once.

The doctor, who was a young man of athletic build, went back with the signor in his carriage, absently listening, on the way, to the signor's account of the girl's sickness, due to a cancer, as in her mother's case, the mother and daughter being very much alike. Yes, indeed, the girl had been a perfect flower, only such a short time ago! The doctor, paying but slight attention, was thinking that a little morphine would very well quiet the trouble for the night and that afterward, if the case proved difficult, he would shift

it to somebody else. He should demand twenty lire, at least, for making a visit on such a night as that! The wind howled, the rain flooded the carriage, and the horse balked. Finally they arrived. "Make yourself at home, Doctor—there is the room—there's the servant—I'll stay here just outside—we'll help you in any way we can."

The doctor entered. Matilda lit a candle and placed it on a table. The tremulous light feebly illuminated the simple and slightly disorderly room of the Signor Giacomino. The doctor gazed about, not seeing the patient. It was very strange! She had covered her face with the sheet and uttered never a sound.

"Give me some more light," said the doctor sharply, "and close the door."

Signor Giacomino was sitting just outside, in the little dining room. He was still clad in his wet overcoat and was slightly shivering—perhaps with the cold.

"The blessed girl—proud, like her mother. Much too hard on herself. She wouldn't tell even me, and with such a sickness as that! Suppose she should die, here, and tonight!"

A long, piercing groan was heard. Signor Giacomino grew pale. The doctor came into the room. "You've given the morphine, Doctor?"

The doctor looked at him with a slightly mocking air, saying ironically, "Morphine! my dear sir!" And, putting on his overcoat, he added, "Excuse me, but who are you, and who is—" he hesitated—"the lady?"

"I am her father's brother, I am her uncle, her uncle," quickly replied the signor.

"Well, sir, I must tell you, if you are not aware of it already, that your niece is about to become a mother. It's no case for me. I will send the local obstetrician—" and he went to the door.

Signor Giacomino was pale as a corpse. "I—you—what are you saying? You—you are mistaken! It is impossible!"

"Well, well, your niece will tell you about it. There is certainly no tumor. But very soon there will be a little newcomer. The birth will be rather hard, perhaps, but

the lady is very strong. Good evening." Matilda closed the door upon the retreating physician.

Was it possible that he had really gone away, this man, this man who had just said this tremendous thing? Chevalier Giacomino felt his head revolving and his ears roaring. He dropped into a chair, to save himself from falling, and could think of nothing at all. But he arose again as another groan came from his niece's room. The whole horrible truth was flashing before his brain. More than all else, though, he was conscious of a great grief and pain, greater than any distress he had ever before experienced. His grief was the grief of disillusionment. It was the bitter and ironic grief of knowing that Nora, the niece whom he had so much loved, and who had held such a high place in his esteem, that Nora, Giuditta's daughter, who had been so studious, industrious and serious-minded, had fallen so very, very low!

This sense of disillusionment, of betrayal, of certainty that the truth had suddenly leaped to light, rendered the timid and honest soul of the signor suddenly fierce and brutal. All his feelings abruptly melted into a deep resentment, and made him cry out, "What a shame!"

The suffering, trembling girl in the next room heard that cry, understood her uncle's words, and was cut by them as if by a knife. She rose up in her bed, sought her clothing, and, in a stifled voice, exclaimed, "I will go away, go away at once, Uncle, you are right. I won't disgrace your home. I will go right away to the hospital——" and she started to make good her words.

But her uncle entered the room and, with an expression on his face which she had never seen before said, dryly and sadly, "Close the door. You will not go away. Nobody must know. Here there are no people but ourselves—try not to cry too loudly—tell me——" and he approached the side of the bed on which she was sitting, with her limbs hanging down, her abdomen very large, her hair loose upon her shoulders, her face ashen, her hands picking at the bed clothing—"tell me just one thing. Who is your lover?"

"I have none, I have none, I swear it! I haven't seen him any more, and I have suffered so much! Months of

agony—listen to me, Uncle! Listen to me, I beg you, don't let me die in desperation! I have traveled so long, tonight, in a slow train, I had no money—otherwise I shouldn't have come here. I wanted to go far away. At Turin, in the college, nobody knew anything about it. And then, there were the sisters—I just had to go away. So I told a lie and said that you were sick, and had sent for me at Florence. So I was excused. Nobody knows anything. I only want to die—I pray that I may die. And everybody said that I was prettier than ever, and that my little vacation had done me so much good! Ah, yes, yes! Don't open your eyes like that, Uncle! Yes, it all happened during my vacation with you. So I left Turin. At Florence, there was an old helper from the college whom I thought would be good to me. I told her everything, and begged her help, not for myself, but for my child—why I could feel the child moving within me! I couldn't die, I didn't want to die! The child will be mine, my very own, and I'll beg my bread if I have to, but I won't kill it. That horrible woman proposed that very thing to me! What a dreadful deed! No, no, shame is better than that! I will go away from you, and live somehow at Florence—it doesn't matter how! They wouldn't receive me at the hospital a little while ago. So I thought I'd go to Rome, to a hospital where I have heard of a physician who treats people free, as a matter of charity. I meant to write you—I don't know—I felt so badly! I was so afraid! As a last hope, I caught the train to arrive here tonight—I had only two lire—it was raining—I took a carriage and came——” and she ceased, exhausted.

Matilda, crying, hastened up, supported her, and poured a spoonful of soup between her lips.

“But I,” repeated Signor Franchi coldly, in a hard voice, as he came closer and clasped Nora in his arms, “I must know the man's name!”

“Ah,” she sighed, her voice tremulous with bitter irony, “laugh, laugh at me, Uncle. The man was—the Little Count Cenni.”

“He? That worm?”

“Yes, he. I—don't know why. I didn't love him. I

was sorry for him. He seemed only a child. Perhaps I stirred him, in some way, without knowing it. He said he adored me, that he was unhappy—and one day—before we left—oh, how terrible! So many years of honor, of struggles, of sacrifices, and then to fall—to fall! Oh!” her cry was stifled low as she saw her uncle withdrawing, without another word to her. “Have pity on me, have a little pity, in God’s name! Don’t drive me away, for the sake of my mother! You, who loved her so much!” And she fell back, exhausted, with a convulsive sob.

About six o’clock in the morning old Matilda entered the room in which the signor had shut himself up while awaiting the obstetrician. He had remained on his feet all night, his half-closed eyes peering through the window at the dark road outside. Old Matilda bore on her right arm, and turned slightly toward her, a small bundle wrapped up in a big Turkish towel. She placed the bundle on the bed, placed a white woolen shawl about the bundle, and opened, between the folds of the shawl, a tiny crack. “So that it can breathe,” she remarked, “without catching cold. It’s a fine girl.” And she abruptly departed, closing the door behind her.

Signor Giacomino heard it all, understood it all, and resolved to remain where he was, motionless, at the window. He looked out into the avenue, faintly visible, with other things, in the early light of dawn. He saw the big horse-chestnut trees moving slowly in the wind, and perceived the last clouds disappearing from the clearing sky. All things seemed to have become placid and peaceful, and he suddenly seemed to become aware of a voice within his heart, counseling mercy and charity. “No, you cannot abandon your own flesh and blood.” Within his honest heart he reviewed the tenderness and love he had had for Giuditta. His love had never been confessed to the woman who, ignorant of it, had not returned it. All his dreams of a family and domestic happiness had been stifled within him. Then the untimely death of his brother had brought inconsolable sorrow to the widow, who had survived her husband such a short time! The signor had strongly felt a sense of duty toward the little orphans, linked to him by a

dual bond of affection, and now all his memories, all that remote life of his, surged up with strange intensity in his mind. And still, his eyes full of tears, he obstinately persisted in remaining motionless before the window, as if absorbed in external things. But these very external things seemed, in their placidity and greatness, to persuade him to accept unalterable destiny, seemed to repeat words of peace and good will. No, no, he could never desert his own blood!

Very, very gradually, and glancing fearfully toward the door, he stirred, and began to approach the bed. He slowly unfolded a bit of the white covering about the tiny bundle, opened a crack, and saw—saw a small, round, red face, a mouth tiny as the tiniest of strawberries, and a little, flat nose. At the same moment he saw two eyes of indefinite color open wide and seem to fix themselves upon him. Then he bent over, farther, farther—— An odor as of a nest, as of feathers, as of new and marvelous things, came forth from that little face of the newborn child. Signor Giacomino almost believed that the little, red, strawberry mouth was smiling at him, at his very self! And, like a thief who is furtively stealing a priceless jewel, he tenderly placed a light, tender kiss on the small, fragrant forehead. He was answered by a loud and vigorous "Yah," the utterance of a being who knows what it wants, and who is obstinately determined. The "Yah" was followed by another, and still another. The red face became purple. Oh, the poor little thing! What could be the matter? Matilda, Matilda, here—hurry! But Matilda did not come, and the signor became alarmed, scared, bewildered—without an idea what he should do——

Matilda, entering five minutes later, beheld Signor Giacomino Franchi, ex-vice-librarian of the Ministry, confirmed bachelor and her revered master, walking up and down in the room, and balancing, with the greatest care, the small, white bundle.

The red Countess Cenni, stretched luxuriously in her favorite easy chair, handed a letter to her darker sister with the remark, "From the nurse." The dark sister ad-

justed her glasses, read the letter, and rang for the servant. "Tell the count to come here."

After a delay of some time, the count, the Little Count of former times, entered, humming an air, elegant, perfumed, with a cigarette in his hand, his hair surmounted by a gay cap, his reddish beard freshly trimmed. "Here I am," he said, stretching himself out on a couch as if he were the conqueror of all Gaul, and resuming his humming.

The aunts did not speak for a moment. They merely looked at him with an expression of wonder and satisfaction which signified, "He is indeed irresistible."

There is no more sickness, no more fear, no more medical treatment. The little count has been fully launched into society and fashionable life. In a few months he has become a tyrant, defying all supervision, ignoring every precaution, oblivious of all the doctors' prescriptions, throwing to the winds all the care with which his venerable aunts had been tormenting him for twenty years.

"Well, Rodolfo, the nurse will soon be here. Are you going to see her?" These words really meant, "She mustn't know that you are the child's father."

"Mimi Pinson is a blonde, well known, as I've heard say," hummed the nephew, rather more loudly than before.

"Your—your—friend—is at Turin. Has she written?"

"Mimi Pin——"

"Come, come, Rodolfo!"

"Oh, my dear aunts, what a bother! There's no trouble, can't you be at peace? I leave you all the liberty you want, if you'll only let me alone. What do you want me to do about the nurse? If kindly heaven presents me with a child——" and he began to hum again.

"Hush, hush!" said the two aunts, almost together.

"What will the janitor think!" exclaimed the young man loudly.

"If the case is like this," said the red aunt, becoming still redder with contempt, "you had better refuse to recognize the child. An unknown father and a foundling asylum will do for the child. But at least show a little feeling for the fact that you are a father, and a little sense of duty toward the young mother."

"Well, if we get married what more do you want?"

"I certainly don't want that!" said the other aunt, who was the calmer, in a low, grave voice. "You, the last Count Cenni, the only heir——"

"Hugged by the arms of death," said the young man, "reared in plasters, with a sick liver, almost dead with boredom and abstinence—go on, dear Aunt."

"A poor——"

"School teacher."

"Neither young nor pretty——"

"But brave and ardent——"

"Shameless!"

"Oh, come now, dear Aunt, that's about enough. She is a lovely girl, who has saved me from death by sacrificing herself, poor thing. That is sure. My dear aunts, you ought to have a little gratitude. She would be company for you. She won't be pretentious, because she's poor; nor vain, since she's not pretty; nor wasteful, because she's not young; nor jealous, because—— Everything I offer will suffice, and everything you give her will be excellent. And then, dear aunts, you are still young and lovely, but some day you will be old and troublesome, and that's why the chevalier Giacomino won't ever get married. I shan't care much about being company for you and leaving my wife with you. Buck up. I have just had a letter from the college. The directors have agreed. They think that the uncle is sick, they have accepted the resignation of their faithful teacher, to occur toward the end of this year. In six months, Countess Cenni, junior, will be here in the house. She's a little angel, and you know it very well."

He expelled a mouthful of smoke, turned to admire himself in a mirror, and then looked at his watch. "Why, it's three o'clock! I must go. I'm going skating. Good-bye, dear aunts, think of the nurse. She's well paid, because she takes good care of the baby. You can go off to the mountains, and Uncle Giacomino will look after the child. I have other things to occupy me—my sports, my club, and art—theatrical art. Last night, now, there was an adorable Mimi Pinson. Good-bye, beloved aunts—I embrace you, and here's a kiss for both of you!"

The two aunts remained silent, somewhat upset, but satisfied.

"He's a fine fellow," exclaimed the red aunt. "Since—since that day he's become another man. Ah!" And with a sigh, she stretched herself out in the chair. "What lucky things men are!"

"Nora has wonderful health," murmured the black aunt. "They say that the child will be very beautiful, and she is only forty days old!"

"She'll look like me. She'll be blond, pale blond. Well, this Nora Franchi will be a better wife for him than some street vampire would be!"

"And she'll do just what we want her to!"

"She'll be a real wife, and nobody else can restrain Rodolfo in the wild pace he's going."

"If you please, the nurse is here," announced the servant.

"Tell her to come in."

The woman entered. She was a young peasant woman, with sly, black eyes. Her last baby was dead, her husband far away in Tripoli, where he was employed, all the circumstances were favorable. She was intelligent and would understand the situation.

"Good afternoon, Nurse. You have been informed, I believe, that we want to arrange about rearing the child of our poor dead friend."

"Yes, Lady."

"Dead, poor thing," repeated the dark aunt, with a sigh.

"But the father?" asked, slyly, the nurse. "Who is the father?"

The ladies looked at each other a little uncertainly.

"The lady who accompanied me," said the nurse, "told me that the father is that fine-looking young man. Is it true?"

The countesses looked at each other again, and the nurse continued, lowering her voice, "I have been also told that the mother is not dead, but that she has gone away and left the child." The ladies half closed their eyes.

"I am to say that she is dead, though. Oh, that's all right. All I want is my pay. It's nothing to me. I am poor, Ladies, and must look for myself. I give my blood, so

to speak, and bring up a fine girl, but I want three hundred lire, double pay for three months, and a coral necklace."

"Behave yourself well and you shall have everything you want. You must be prudent, you must keep your eyes open and say nothing."

"Surely, Ladies, you couldn't think——"

"The child must be kept for a year or two." And the dark aunt gave the woman a gold piece.

"Oh, my Lady! I have seen the child, she is very pretty, God bless her! Now I will go away."

And the nurse disappeared, leaving in the room an odor of dried chestnuts and rancid oil.

"Well, now," said the dark aunt slowly, "that would be a splendid solution, anyway. Supposing the child could be passed off as a natural child of Signor Giacomino?"

It was a lovely, warm, calm, clear evening, a June evening, starlit and fragrant. The wistaria vine in the little garden was in full bloom, and the chevalier Giacomino Franchi, standing at his window, was inhaling the subtle perfume. Nora, quite well again, had returned to her college. In six months Count Cenni was to marry her. She would be married by the priest and the civil authorities. However, the condition insisted on by the Cenni family was, that the dishonorable truth should remain unknown and unsuspected, and that Nora should enter that family as a virgin bride. It was on account of this condition that the child had been sent away into the country with the nurse, far away, and not to return for a long time, so that the baby might be considered the orphan of a dead family relative. This was the painful, humiliating condition which had been exacted.

Nora had accepted it, however, and her Uncle Giacomino, flushing with shame, had been obliged to bow to it. He had been greatly saddened at having to part with the baby, who had been in his house for nearly three months. Uncle Giacomino had accompanied the nurse to the station that very day. There, in his room, the baby's little crib still remained. Why! There was the night lamp, there was a forgotten package and the baby's cap! What a miserable nurse!

He collected all the things together and when Matilda came in to remove the crib, he said, "Leave it for awhile—we will think of it tomorrow." The crib was empty. The little round, red face, with its great, luminous, heavenly eyes, was no longer visible. How still the house was! This was the time for the baby's bath. And it was in the train and probably crying, and in charge of that coarse, horrid nurse. Who could tell whether that nurse would treat the baby well? Suppose she let it suffer? Here, there was at least Matilda to look out for the baby. How she would take care of it! Poor little thing! Without mother, without father—that worm—without Matilda, and without Uncle Giacomino. It was so useless that Uncle Giacomino should love that dear baby, poor innocent, who was rained down unexpectedly into his house, and brought there by a wild March tempest!

How could he sleep peacefully? It was impossible. Giacomino Franchi went to bed, but failed to sleep. He blamed the bed, the heat, the mosquitoes, but he had only a single thought. He could not live without the baby. And, early next morning, the chevalier Franchi packed his valise, saying to Matilda, "I am going on business to the region where that nurse lives. I want to see for myself how things are there."

"Excuse me, Sir, the nurse can scarcely have arrived. But you are right. The thought of the journey, and the poor baby, kept me from sleeping. It is better that you should go, Sir. And—" by this time she was calling from the staircase—"if you ever give the child to me I'll never let her get away!"

Signor Giacomino turned for a moment to put his arm around Matilda, the worthy, faithful, good, affectionate woman. That evening, the faithful and affectionate woman saw her master returning with the nurse and the baby.

"What do you think, Matilda! People may say what they like. They can say the child's mine, if they want to. Things in that miserable mountain district won't do at all. I've brought back the baby and she'll stay here."

"That man was probably the father," had opined the nurse. Now she was sure of it.

Two years have passed since the marriage of Nora Franchi with Rodolfo Cenni. The couple made a long journey. They visited Paris and London, passed a summer at Venice and a winter at Florence. Nora has made herself beloved and a boy has been born who is strong, dark like his mother, and the two countesses are very proud, this time. Uncle Giacomino is well content. Things couldn't be better. They have left him his little baby, but the parents have come to see the child. Her hair is a light red color. She is a true Cenni, but she seems divine to Uncle Giacomino.

Those blue eyes which smile at him, that little mouth which is so sweet to him, enchant him. She walks, runs, talks, and is so intelligent! She likes only him and Matilda. She calls him "Papa Mino," as the evil nurse taught her, and without teaching her the word "uncle" at all.

One day, when the child was not very well, Uncle Giacomino took her to the Pincian Park to play, and began to read his newspaper as she was amusing herself. But the imperious little thing wanted him, as well as everything else, and demanded that he come and play with her, calling out very loudly, "Papa! Papa Mino-o-o!"

He was not aware that, behind him, two gentlemen were standing, and that they were looking about and talking and laughing with each other. But they suddenly called to him, "How do you do, Chevalier Franchi! You don't come any more to the mineral springs?"

He recognized the gentlemen, excused himself and bowed, in his turn. "Why, it's the honorable senator and my friend the lawyer! Well, I am cured permanently, myself, and haven't any further need of the springs."

"You have other things to think of than the springs," remarked the lawyer. "You have evidently other thoughts, and other cares. Splendid! Splendid!" and he tapped him on the shoulder, as he murmured in his ear, "Papa, hey?"

The signor's face was very red. "Why—why—I am not married—I——"

"Oh, we know, we know. Of course. No, she isn't your wife. I'm only joking. What a fine child!" and the lawyer

concluded, "the Mamma is a mature and blond, and rather fat lady, isn't she?" At this remark Signor Giacomino's face became fairly purple. What should he say? How could he undertake difficult and dangerous explanations? He didn't know what to say.

"By jove, Chevalier," said the senator, "a lovely little girl like that is indeed something to be proud of!"

"And," supplemented the lawyer, "the mother ought to recognize her, whether that mother is blond or brunette." Brunette, indeed!

"Come now," said the senator, "tell us what is the complexion of the—seductress?"

Signor Giacomino was red as fire, but he replied, "Ah, the complexion! To be sure, the complexion! Well, I don't remember!" And he turned his back on the two astonished men and ran away to the child, who had thrown her playthings into the street.

THE ADOPTED WAIF

By S. V. JIVADINOVIC

I

HE had retreated all the way across the mountainous region of Albania. His mother, who had carried him on her back, had been struck in the breast by an Albanian bullet but he had been miraculously spared.

Both of them had fallen to the ground and they had remained there motionless throughout the long night. Her face was buried in the ground and her arms were spread widely apart. He sprawled by her side on the snow-covered earth.

One could see the glimmer of the camp fires, lighted by the retreating army, burning on the hillsides of the surrounding mountains. On the breeze floated the confused shouts of the men. From far in the distance came the crackle of isolated rifles. Abandoned horses drowsed nearby, standing motionless as statues. He was frightened by the mystery of the night. The somber figure of his dead mother contrasted with the startling whiteness of the snow. Vainly he pleaded through his tears and shook her arm saying, "Mamma, Mamma, do wake up!"

The glacial breeze whistled through the desolate valley and the doleful lamentations of all Nature stirred about them. It was a weird, very clear night. The heavens appeared to be frozen there in space and the sky was flecked with tiny, motionless clouds above which shone the still, white moon. There was something cruelly heartless in the cold, white light with which it flooded the immense valley. The little stream which severed the valley into two parts was silent beneath its thick coat of ice but it glistened like pure silver when the moonlight penetrated the dark clouds.

My wife and I discovered them there the following morning. His mother was entirely covered over with snow

and he, with his head pressed firmly against her back, was thereby unable to make the slightest movement. His eyes were wide open and he had concentrated all his strength in this supreme effort to await the coming of dawn.

"It is a little child!" cried my wife in amazement, getting down from the horse. I hastened to the spot and gathered him in my arms. I examined him anxiously, vainly trying to find some feeble sign of life. We immediately wrapped him in blankets and my wife took him in her arms.

"Let me take care of the child," she said, "while you see what has happened to his mother."

She was lying flat on her stomach with her fists tightly clenched. I gently turned her over on her back and I was able to read in her frozen stare the grim horror of death and her one last supreme thought concerning her poor child. Her clothing crackled lugubriously when it was disturbed and her wax-like features betrayed the signs of slow starvation. Long plaits of white hair were to be seen escaping from under her shawl. My heart contracted with sorrow and it seemed to me that she turned even whiter when the moment came for me to separate her from her child.

Respectfully I took off my hat and bowed. Alongside of her one was barely able to distinguish a little patch of blood-stained snow. From the distance came the sound of a firing squad, as if some one were being executed, and we realized that we would have to hasten on.

"He is really alive," exclaimed my wife, wrapping him even closer and gently rocking him on her knees. I took him from her and after having undressed him I rubbed his little body with snow and then bundled him up in a warm blanket. A moment later he opened his eyes and looked at us with astonishment. Then he said to us in a voice which made us tremble with pity, "Mamma . . . give me some bread!" My eyes were filled with tears as I looked about for a biscuit which I dipped in some brandy and held out to him.

"It's very bitter!" he exclaimed.

"But you must eat it just the same," said my wife. "It

will warm you up." Saying this she pressed him closer to her. This strange voice surprised him and he turned toward her and examined her closely. He seemed to be trying to recognize the dear eyes of his mother.

"Mamma! Where is my mamma!" he demanded in a pleading tone of voice, turning his head and looking for her everywhere.

"Don't worry; you must eat now. Your mother was taken slightly ill and she could not carry you any more. We will not join her until supper time."

"My head aches," he murmured, trembling beneath the blankets.

"Never mind. You will soon feel better. Now we will get on the horse's back and this gentleman will lead us in search of your mother," said my wife in a broken tone of voice, trying to conceal her tears. Not wishing him to catch sight of his dead mother again I led the horse forward a few steps and then we all continued our journey.

From that day on until the time we finally reached the coast we kept on deceiving him by telling him that his mother was waiting for us. At Scutari we halted for several days in order to take a much needed rest. From there we proceeded to St. Jean which we attained in time to board the refugees' ship.

Heavens! How difficult it was for me to allow myself to be separated from them. This little child gave me the immense joy which I had yearned for in vain for so many long years! How happy it made me at night when I would lie down beside him and gently pat his little hand, to hear the gentle wheezing of his tiny nose! His name was Ivan and he was barely three years old. Doubtlessly he loved me as he would a father, for he would always look at me with astonishment, unable to understand just what I meant to him and why it was that I loved him so tenderly. In the morning when the order would come to resume the march I would let him sleep until the very last minute. I would quietly unfurl the tent over his head, saddle and load the horse, give the reins to my wife and then, while he was still drowsy with sleep, I would take him up and carry him off in my arms.

When he would finally wake up he would reward me with a sweet smile and it would seem to me that the day began only from that moment on. I would hold him erectly in my arms and would lean his little head against my shoulder. In this manner we would proceed on our way as if enchanted, he, not yet fully awake and well protected by my arms, and I, touched to the point of tears by his little hands tenderly locked around my neck. During many days we marched along like this with his childish breath lightly brushing against my cheeks.

Judging from the sentiments which he aroused in me it seemed that he had always belonged only to me. He was as curious as a little sparrow. Time and time again my ears have rung with his little shout of astonishment and fear.

But now he is to go very far away and I am to be left alone like some solitary rock in the middle of the ocean. I am to rejoin my regiment and there I will find the commonplace figures of my comrades. Formerly I had loved these men for they were all worthy peasants whose very bodies, faces and eyes reflected the rich color of their native soil. But now I was quite indifferent to all this. It only served to make me remember the time when I was quite alone.

All my joys are about to disappear. No longer will I have Ivan's early morning song to fill me with new ambition. My heart will not tremble with emotion any more as it did when he would grasp me by my moustache and ask me, "But what has become of Mamma?"

One night when the blood-red sun was sinking down behind the distant clouds I accompanied them aboard the departing ship. The boat was waiting for the night before sailing on its way. With the coming of the first shadows of evening we were surprised by Austrian *aéroplanes* which bombarded the vessel. Some of the bombs plunged into the ocean whose waves reflected the last feeble rays of daylight.

"Ah! Bandits!" I shouted. "They want to snatch him from me!" Saying this I seized my rifle. I was fully aware of the fact that my act was quite useless, but, in

spite of this, I used up all my cartridges firing at these black birds of prey hovering overhead on their wings loaned to them by Death. My eyes were filled with tears of absolute helplessness. How I would like to bring down one of those miserable heroes who slaughter innocent women and children!

After that they went on their way. Under the cover of night the vessel raised anchor and sailed off. Its somber outline was darker even than the shadows of night. It was not difficult for my eyes to follow it and watch it as it slipped silently over the waves and sped away into the obscurity.

All of a sudden it seemed to me that I was there quite alone by the edge of the open sea, hopeless and lost. The ocean was hidden from my eyes but its restless beating seemed to carry to my ears some word from those who had departed and who were still thinking of me.

After that I returned to the encampment. I sought to hide myself from every one and I lay down flat on my back and contemplated the heavens. The gentle ocean rain pattered against the outspread wings of my tent and seemed to be whispering something. Formerly I loved such nights as this one. This gentle whispering would then arouse my thoughts of the past and eventually bring sleep to my eyes. But at present it seemed to make me realize all I had just lost—perhaps forever.

Now we have attained Corfu and we have halted there. We thought that we had been definitely saved. But in this we made a great mistake. Every day we contemplated the digging of fresh graves. The Ypsos, lurking beneath the heavy shadows of the olive trees and the intoxicating perfume of the orange trees in full bloom, killed our soldiers in masses. Every morning we would give them up to the cemetery of the near-by church.

There lie children worthy of their native land. There the restless ocean sends back to them its mortal cry, the owl hoots its weird song above them, the orange trees decorate them with their petals which the ocean breezes detach from the branches and scatter over their graves while the near-by church embalms them in myrrh, filled with the

perfume of all eternity, and the olive groves silently repeat to them the life of Christ.

During this period of terrible extermination our souls were drawn as taut as cords. It was there that I received my first letter from my wife in which she informed me that she had stopped off in France and that she hoped to reach Paris. After that I received long, eloquent letters filled with tender yearning and with hope. There was a great deal in them concerning Ivan. My wife spoke of him as being full of life and showing great intelligence. She added that he was affectionately attached to her by love and gratefulness. At present he was beginning to speak French with the companions in the neighborhood. At first it had greatly confused his childish brain but recently he had begun speaking Serb to his mother and French to his little companions.

"It is the conditional clause that causes him the greatest difficulty," my wife would write. "When he is conversing with his companions I notice that such is the case with them too in spite of the fact that they are French. . . . One day I did not want to let him go out. He said:

"Do you want me to die in here?" This reply made me laugh so that I opened the door and let him run away to play . . ."

How very distressing it was for me not to be able to be with them! What a delight it would be to have him near me, to watch his growth and development, to assist him during that period when one is liable to be led astray, to guide and form his spirit and also to teach him how to love and enjoy life! Later on when I was wounded in the engagements on the Saloniki front and they had found it necessary to amputate my arm just below the shoulder, I did not suffer any more at all. I was consoled by the thought that before very long I would see him again, never to be separated. I informed my wife of the misfortune that had befallen me and of my intended return.

II

It was on a dull, overcast night that I descended from the train and took the shortest road leading to our house, which was located near the Luxembourg Gardens.

"It is on the third floor; first door on the left!" said the janitress looking at me over the rim of her glasses. My legs were trembling with emotion as I knocked on the door which was thrown open by my wife.

"Enter quietly!" she whispered. "Ivan is sleeping."

I entered the room on tip-toes and very quietly approached his little bed. My wife and I had even forgotten to kiss each other. . . . We both felt that he alone was in need of love and protection and we did not consider our own selves at all. I looked at him greatly surprised. I was tempted to lie down by his side as I had done in the past beneath my army tent. I wanted to have him near me, relaxed in slumber, but filled with young life and the youthful ardor stirring within him.

"How he has grown!" I exclaimed in astonishment as I gently uncovered him a trifle.

He was sleeping calmly. His brow was covered with his thick hair and he was perspiring under the heavy blankets. He was tall and thin but full of energy. His dark-brown complexion, which I so admire in young boys, was shiny, glowing and full of virile force. I could see his long, brown arms tanned by the sun and his fists which were firmly clenched.

"How he has grown!" I repeated again, looking at his bare knees, which were scratched where he had slid along on them.

"Everything goes on here quite as if we were at war," said my wife when she saw that I was looking at his scarred knees. "He plays soldier all day long in one of the unfinished houses being built in the neighborhood! I can't forbid him to do so as it would make him too sad. You will see all this tomorrow. He could not be more precious to me if he were my own child," she added, gently stroking his hair.

In spite of the fact that I was worn out by my long trip, I was unable to fall asleep all that night. I could

hear the bells tolling the hours from a near-by tower and it seemed to me that this night was longer than an entire year.

"He must be sleeping now, and he has not the slightest idea that I have arrived," I repeated to myself while calculating the hours which still separated me from the time of his awakening.

"I don't know, but it seems to me that you should cut that off," said my wife to me in the morning, pointing to my long beard. "Indeed not! Never will I do that!" I exclaimed. This conversation woke him up.

"Mamma! . . ."

We heard him calling to her and she hastened to his side and said: "Your papa has just arrived from Saloniki!"

"Where is he? Where is Papa?" he cried, rubbing the sleep from his eyes. From his tone of voice I realized that he had been prepared for my arrival. His dear, familiar voice was so filled with happiness that it made me tremble. In his little night-shirt, which was still warm from his sleep, my wife took him up in her arms and placed him on my knees. Grasping him with my one arm I pressed him tenderly against my breast. At this moment I regretted not having my other arm in order to have felt him all the more. I sensed him cuddling up against me and I observed that he recognized me perfectly.

It was with difficulty that I finally overcame my emotion. I examined him affectionately from every angle. There was something very intelligent and wide awake about his well-developed brow and one could read his thoughts in the depths of his eloquent eyes. He was looking at me with astonishment and surprise. He didn't question me at all about my amputated arm. No doubt Mamma had warned him not to talk about it to me. However, he was greatly surprised at seeing my beard. He had never seen one so near as this and, quite unconsciously, his hand sought to touch it. I took hold of his hand and ran it along my bearded cheeks. "A beard!" he exclaimed. It seemed to me that there was a note of derision in his words, but it was impossible for me to be angry and I promised him that I would take him out to walk with me.

III

Twice daily we would go out walking together. He would take hold of my empty coat-sleeve and we would stroll along together in this manner. Nothing would preoccupy my thoughts when I was in his society. I would have asked him anything at all in order to have made him talk. I was never fully aware of what he was saying to me but his voice would vibrate in my ear and seem to touch my very heart-strings. Thus we would finally attain the park and, once there, I would allow him to run freely about and embrace with his glance the thousand and one various-colored flowers. I would follow him in his play and a deep joy would take complete possession of me.

When we would become exhausted we would seat ourselves somewhere on some bench. Then I would tell him all about the war and the battles I had been through and I would explain to him, for perhaps the hundredth time, about the battle of Kayruakcalan in which I lost my arm. It always pleased me to have him directly in front of me when telling him these stories. This little boy's soul was so very sensitive that I was able to read in his eyes the effect my adventures had upon his imagination. It would frequently occur that when I would tell him about some decisive moment of the engagement, he would suddenly take hold of my hand and press it with all his strength. His features—flushed from having raced about—would suddenly turn pale. He would lean against me as if seeking to protect himself from some invisible danger and he would listen to me breathlessly with his eyes closed.

One fine day when I was at a loss as to what to tell him, inasmuch as everything had been repeated so many times, he said to me:

"Tell me, Papa, where do you place your beard when you go to sleep, above or under the bed-covers?"

I truly believe that I must have appeared ridiculous at that moment. His question had come as such a surprise! What a curious idea for him to have! I felt very much like taking hold of him by the tip of his little ear. I did not answer him immediately and, after having meditated a few moments, I hesitatingly replied:

"Well, now, I'm sure I don't know! I have never even thought about it. I will see about it tonight."

IV

All night long I tossed about in my bed trying to find a suitable answer to the question. I was aware that I had never paid any attention at all to my beard and that I would retire without any thought of the infernal thing. But I found that it was not agreeable to keep it under the covers and even less so above them! I attempted lying on my side but in that position the stiff hair of my beard tickled my chest!

"Ah! what a little imp he is," I said to myself furiously. "What an impossible question to ask! What are the children of today coming to!"

Ivan was still sound asleep when I left the house with the firm resolution of having my beard shaved off. Indeed, I should have had it done before having come to Paris. I entered the first barber-shop which was open, and in a few seconds time I was relieved of it.

I returned to the house very self-conscious and ashamed of myself. It seemed to me that I felt the cold against my cheeks. It struck me that it would be a wise thing for me to assume a severe expression when entering his bedroom but, having noticed the pained and disconsolate look on my wife's face, who was standing alongside of his little cot, I asked in an alarmed tone of voice:

"What is wrong with him?"

"I'm sure I don't know," she replied with tears in her eyes. "He is unable to get up and complains of severe pains in his stomach."

"We must not make light of any attack of illness," I exclaimed, and my throat suddenly seemed to have become parched. "Where is it that it hurts you?" I asked, forgetting all about my clean-shaved beard.

He took hold of my hand and, placing it on the exact spot, he answered: "There is where I am suffering." He spoke half in Serbian and half in French. He had a very high fever and his eyes were burning with a strange light. Very much frightened, I turned toward my wife. She

explained to me that he often complained of severe pains in the stomach after having played too much.

I found fault with her for not having already summoned a doctor and I rushed out into the street like a crazy man.

"It is a disease which only attacks small boys," said the doctor; "an operation is absolutely essential . . . but . . ."

"I beg of you to tell me everything," I cried, overcome by anxiety.

"What I am afraid of is that blood-poisoning has already set in and in that event—it will be too late!"

Leaving my wife almost unconscious from emotion, we lost no time in having him taken from the house. Because of my hand which had been amputated, we were able to have him admitted to a military hospital.

The doctors had advised me to remain by his side until they should put him under ether. I held him on my knee in one of the corners of the room while I watched one of the nurses undress him. His feverish gaze fixed itself heavily upon me as if he was imploring me to save him. I drew him to me and, kissing him on his cheek, I said: "Do not be afraid, my son, I will remain by your side!"

By this time he was only clothed in his little undershirt and he was all a-tremble. When I saw his little body before me, with his deep, black eyes seeking my own glance, it seemed to me that I could already visualize him stretched out at full length on the table.

I took him up in my arms and carried him bodily into the operating-room. There we found several persons all dressed in white and whose faces neither Ivan nor I were familiar with. At this moment he put his little arms around my neck and murmured broken-heartedly: "Papa!" I trembled at this word. It seemed to me that he was reproaching me as if I was carrying him towards death! Then, all of a sudden, I had before my eyes the panorama of the entire, wild countryside of Albania with both of us grasping each other like this as we retreated before the enemy. But at that time I was carrying him back to life; I was saving him from death on the frozen Albanian plain and I was rocking him in my arms in order to keep alive the vital force which was slowly leaving him. At

that time I was offering him my very life's blood in the words of fatherly affection with which I encouraged him and in the evening, beneath my tent, I pictured a wreath of flowers gracing his little brow. But at present. . . .?

"Make hastel!" exclaimed a severe voice. With an effort I braced myself. A nurse drew near and took him from my arms, while I turned my head to conceal the tears in my eyes and began making my way to the door.

"Stay where you are," commanded the same severe voice. Mastering my sorrow, I approached the operating-table and took hold of his hand. He was looking at me timidly and I was able to fathom his question by looking at his glance, quite as if I could see what was going on inside of his brain. He was now under the effect of the ether. I was on the point of leaving the room when just at that moment it seemed that he was calling to me.

"It is nothing—nothing," the doctor said encouragingly. It was the result of the sleep induced by the chloroform. One was able to distinguish in the room the faint, trembling words:

"The war . . . the war. . . . Papa. . . . His amputated arm . . ."

It seemed to me that these words came from the shadowy depths of a tomb where Death was standing patiently on guard.

I sensed that these were his last remarks, uttered in memory of all the suffering we had endured together and that a barrier had separated me from him for all the rest of my life and for all eternity as well. I pressed my hand over my head and, stumbling out of the room, I allowed myself to sink down on a chair in the corridor. I could hear steps moving about in the operating-room, and after that all was silent. It seemed to me that my head was bursting beneath a terrific pressure and that a cold, frigid hand was seeking about in my breast, trying to find my heart. I felt that I was going quite mad and I began crying broken-heartedly: "Lord! have pity—have pity!"

V

A long time passed like this. Several times I approached the door, hoping to enter, but I did not have the strength to raise my hand. Vainly I listened with my ear against the door, but a strange rumbling in my head prevented me from hearing anything. This rumbling seemed to split my brain and a terrible presentiment took possession of me. Suddenly the door was thrown open and a nurse, hiding her face in her hands, hurried down the steps. A terrible thought overwhelmed me and like a mad man I rushed into the room and approached the operating-table. At first I was unable to distinguish anything at all, but an incomprehensible force made me lift my one arm and tear my hair. Shortly after this I felt some one shaking me by the shoulder and then I recognized the familiar voice of the doctor seeking to console me:

"Be brave! Nobody would have been able to have saved him. Why did you not bring him here a month sooner?"

These words enabled me to regain possession of myself in spite of the fact that I had not thoroughly understood them. I stooped over a trifle and contemplated Ivan's lifeless features. Very gently I touched him with my hand, as if I had been afraid of waking him up. He was still warm from the glow of life which had scarcely gone from him. I drew still nearer to him and the anguishing thought came to me that possibly the doctor had made some mistake. I attempted to discover on his livid features the smile which I had become so accustomed to. For a long time I contemplated him in this way, asking myself, "Which one of us is dreaming, he or I?" While looking at him my glance would fix itself on his calm features, his fine, large brow and his closed eyes. At the corner of his lips I observed that same expression which was so dear to me and which would come to him when something had surprised him or when he was about to laugh. I began asking myself at just what moments this expression had impressed me the most. Then all of a sudden, incapable of overcoming this one thought which had taken complete possession of me, I was able to recall the occasion. It seemed to me then that he would come to life and would

ask me with that smiling expression in his eyes and on his lips:

"Tell me, Papa, where is it that you place your beard?"

It was evident to me that he was quite dead and that everything was over with. Sobbing with all my soul, I allowed myself to sink down upon his dead body.

THE NIGHT JOURNEY

A LETTISH TALE BY ANNA BRIGADER

THE sun was now low in the west and a light mist mounting from the earth. Where the sun shone, rain-drops still pattered down grayly, but in the shade the droplets falling from the eaves and gables seemed like globules of clear golden and rosy crystal. Forth from the snow sparkling on the fields emerged brown mounds of soil, brightly illuminated by the setting sun. The tree-tops in the distant wood were touched with glowing flame.

Her arms filled with a great bunch of hay, Selma was pausing just within the stable door. With eyes aglow and head bent forward, she stood listening awhile. She had surely heard a faint sound somewhere! She remained motionless for some moments. Her loose hair, straying low over her hot forehead, was faintly stirred by her quick breathing.

All was silent. She must have been mistaken. Shaking her head, Selma started up abruptly, and briskly entered the stable. This remote barn of the Kruhkle family was now empty and cold. Formerly, its very last recess had been occupied by sleek and prosperous cattle. A stall had been partitioned off in a corner for the horse. Behind this thin wall, which was covered with straw and manure, stood Sihle, lowing, her hanging head swinging to and fro as she awaited her caretaker. As Selma threw down the hay before her she stretched out her soft neck and rubbed her head against Selma's sleeve. Selma usually stroked her.

Now, however, Selma pushed her aside. "You must wait, Sihle, for you are no longer first." For yesterday had been a holiday for the Kruhkles. Sihle had given birth to a calf. The calf now claimed attention first of all.

When Selma was feeding and cleaning the cow she usually talked to it. Sometimes she would sing a little

song, all of her own. "Good times are coming, Sihle. Spring is at hand. Spring is here. The snow is melting and will soon go away. The grass will soon come, and so will the yellow flowers. Good times are coming. You will go to the meadow with Austra and Rita. You can all get warm in the sunshine. You will not be hungry any more. We shall see better times, better times." The words poured forth, rhythmically accompanied Selma's thoughts and ceased.

Selma cleaned the cow, milked her and carried the milk into the house. These tasks accomplished she put on her shawl and went out again. The scanty snow crinkled under her feet and the hard and sharp clods of earth impeded her steps. She was very uneasy and kept asking herself, "Why doesn't he come? I've been waiting for him so long! It's a long time. I wonder if anything has happened to him!"

As Selma had covered some distance with her rapid steps, she tried to still her quickly beating heart, stopped abruptly and strained her ear to listen. The sun had set by this time. Deep peace and silence were brooding over the landscape. Selma paused motionless for a time, her hands clasped against her breast, as if she would compel her madly throbbing heart to beat more slowly. She even forced herself to smile.

"Why, I am crazy," she told herself. "Why should I go so far? Everything is well. This isn't the first time! Why can't I ever get used to it? Unexpected things can happen so, everywhere——"

She turned on her heel and moved back toward the house. She tried to persuade herself that she had felt this iniquitude before. How many times had she known this wretched anxiety and unrest because of the man she loved so much! How clearly she remembered those refugee days in the foreign country, when men were obliged to wander far seeking food for their dear ones and for their cattle! How dreadful those days when her husband was absent for weeks at a time, seeking work to gain his bread! He had never been absent from her thoughts for a single moment. Her heart had gone with him on all his wanderings. In

her spirit she spread protecting hands over him, guarding him with all the power of her soul. Firmly as she might believe in the power of the soul and spirit to charm away evil, she knew she was always afraid and trembled all over at every bit of evil news. But only evil was present now in the world. She wanted to safeguard her heart's dearest treasure. She must always be uneasy. During the long hours of her sleepless nights she held protracted speech with her dear husband. She told him all about her sad and lonely hours and bestowed upon him caresses so gentle, shy and tender that they could not bear the light of day. Hardly could she make out her husband's dear form in the distance, hardly could she hear the returning tones of his beloved voice, without feeling as if her beating heart had received a welcome balm. Then all her overwrought nerves were quieted and peace and contentment flooded her soul. It was always just like this. Within her she felt resounding joy, but outwardly she was cool and quiet. Past moments of suffering, endurance—of care, doubt and anxiety, now seemed but the impression of a dream. She would have been ashamed to speak of all this. She would sooner have bitten her tongue out than to utter a single wrathful word of complaint, even though such a word could be due only to her loneliness.

At the house door, Selma took off her shawl and rubbed her brow and cheeks with it. Her face was no longer the same. She had rubbed away all her trouble and unrest. She could now present herself to the people of the place.

The Kruhkle family had returned home in company with a throng of repatriated refugees. The dwellers of the town had found it completely ruined. During the early years of the war, one of the German settlers had made the Kruhkle place his home. He had gone away, God only knew where, and with him had disappeared everything remaining about the place. Neither windows nor doors remained in the buildings.

In the summer time two rooms had been hastily prepared at Kruhkle as a shelter against the wind. Selma's family, including three children and Selma's old mother, had lived

in these rooms. All of them had survived the refugee period, passed in a foreign land. They had brought home with them a few stray remaining bits of their possessions. A few old chests containing kitchenware and tools, buried in the garden, were now restored, happily, to use. These things permitted life to be gradually reconstructed. Selma had thriftily restored something of a home, in spite of her dire poverty.

Selma's return to the house had not been without witnesses. She had heard whispering behind the door and creaking in certain dark corners. When she entered the room, though, all was still as a mouse. She walked into the middle of the room, clapped her hands together, and cried, "Little birds, come along, fly out the nest! Who will be the first one to fly to the mother bird?" Three bright little heads shot at once from three corners, and she was embraced directly by three pairs of warm little arms. "Me! Me! I'm the first one!" This way of doing had become a regular ceremony. She had to stand in the room and cry out to the children like this every evening.

"Let me go, you great things!" exclaimed the mother to the two girls, taking three-year-old Christy into her arms and placing him on a swing. As the little fellow swung high and low, his mouth was working like a bellows. He shouted aloud from fright and joy.

"Now me, now me!" clamored little Rita, waiting for her turn. Austra stood quietly and resignedly by, with a smile. She wanted very much to be swung like that, but she knew she was too old for it. She was fully nine years old, and had to take care of the house. All day long, while her mother was busy, she had to look after her sister and little brother and rack her little brain for ways to keep them happy and occupied. She looked forward to twilight as to the best hour of the day. Twilight was gay every day. Full relaxation only happened when at last the father and mother went out to look after the cows. When the mother came back, she was free to relieve Austra of the care of the smaller children, for housework was no longer possible because of the darkness.

The mother could now devote all her time to her little

ones, especially on evenings when their father was away from home. They would all gather closely about their mother, who sang to them, told them fairy tales, talked about old times, and recounted the adventures happening during those days of the refugee period. The two youngest children had been born in a foreign country, but Austra remembered the time when they had gone away from Courland. She could see herself and the other children in her mother's descriptions.

On this evening, though, Austra immediately saw that there would be no stories. Her mother's lips were smiling, but her eyes were sad. "Her thoughts have gone away again," reflected Austra, sadly. Her sadness made her silent and stiff. Her mood affected the smaller children. "What shall I do?" she murmured, wringing her hands. "If there were only a book to read!"

She loved books. If she only had a book, or even an old newspaper, she would read it from beginning to end to the children, and could quiet herself in this way. For the children nestled close to their big sister, listened breathlessly to words which they did not understand, watched with wonder how quickly and deftly Austra's lips moved, and seemed to be under a spell.

"Yes, a book, a book," begged Rita.

"Where can I find a book?" thought Selma. Books were even rarer than bread. All the books had been lost during the hard times of the past. Austra thought that something might be found in an old chest standing in a corner of the room. Certainly, the best thing to do was to search in that chest.

As the cover was lifted, both little girls grew rosy with joy. It was always great fun to rummage in the old chest. All sorts of things were there. Pockets could be crammed full to running over, but something always remained in the chest. The latter contained odds and ends which had not been finally thrown away. Rags, scraps of cloth, and bits of ribbon were rolled together. Books were absent, but a few old journals were in the bottom of the chest, carefully preserved and bound together. The Kruhkles carefully bound together all the papers which interested them. Long

ago, there had been a fine bundle of papers, kept in a special box. Everything had been left behind when the family had fled, and had fallen into the hands of strangers. In the old chest fragments of the old possessions came now and then to light like bits of china broken long ago.

Selma untied the little string holding the poor, worn-out papers together. One of the journals had a prominent article on "How about our local representatives?" She read a sentence here and there. It all seemed to have happened very long ago and sounded feebly in her ears, like a voice from the grave. Another journal reported certain correspondence, local meetings, and a wordy argument over matters which had been important at that time. The editor praised the manly and fearless attitude of a certain "K" against the unworthy weakness of the local officers. "Perhaps that 'K' was my husband," thought Selma. He had, in fact, been a member of the local council before the war, but he had kept almost nothing at home to tell of his official doings. Selma tied the old journals together again and laid them back in their place.

After the little girls had tired of rummaging in the chest, they went to the window and leaned out. Little Christy, who had now become tired and cross, nestled up to his mother. She quieted him by saying, "We will look out now for Papa!"

"Dunu-dunu," begged the child.

"Yes, yes. We'll sing dunu-dunu."

Dunu-dunu was the "dear father" song, the evening lullaby. As it was sung, Christy leaned his head against his mother's breast and went to sleep. Selma then stopped singing. Over the bright heads of the two little girls, standing out clearly against the darkness in the fading daylight, she gazed forth tirelessly into the distance as she rocked herself and the baby to and fro. The road was melting into the fields in a common shade of grayish red. Selma tried to seize upon the peacefulness of the twilight, but it was lost in the unrest of her troubled soul. True, the children were with her, she was a part of their lives, but they couldn't bring back her loved one. Everything seemed empty when he was absent. Everything

was dark when not brightened by the loved countenance.

Selma never ceased waiting, even when her heart was relieved of its care and uncertainty, even when the painful fancies of the possible dangers and accidents which might befall her husband no longer beset her mind. Even when her husband was at home and close to her she still kept on waiting, waiting for a glance from the beloved eyes that had once set her heart aglow, waiting for a smile to appear on the tightly closed mouth as it had charmed her in the old days, waiting for a touch of his hand to recall those tender caresses of the past, which she cherished among fadeless memories.

Thus sat Selma, as always. This was her reality. But who was there to behold her lovely charm? Only obscurity and night. Never did he so behold her, he who had once kindled the flame of her love. For as soon as his familiar voice was heard, as soon as his expected footsteps became audible, the glow on Selma's face faded, its rosy hue hid away as behind a gray cloud. The longed-for countenance, so keenly awaited, was shamed by sentiment and tenderness, as a familiar garment for daily wear is put to shame by costly and beautiful dress.

The door of the room near by opened, and Selma's mother, wrapped in the evening shadows, came into the room. "It's really too bad," she said, as if to excuse herself. "It's bedtime almost before I have had a chance to get warm cooking supper. The warmth was so good that I hardly realized it was getting dark. Won't you come and eat something?"

"There's a carriage! Father is coming!" cried Austra. Selma, looking out, saw a cart or carriage coming through the gloom. "Come, Mother dear, put the children to bed. I will help unharness the horse." And Selma joyfully handed over the baby to the grandmother, who was sitting close to the hearth, where the embers still threw forth a glow. As she turned, however, and came back toward the window, she saw that she was mistaken, and felt an ominous pain at heart.

"That is not Papa," she said, gently, to the children.

The children had already seen their error. "No, that is

not Papa," repeated Austra. "It's some fine gentlemen. They have two horses."

"Fine 'entlem'n, two hortheth," lisped little Rita.

"What can this mean? Who are these people?" thought Selma, and said to the children, "Go to your grandmother! Eat your supper! Quick, now!"

The children heard their mother's stern command half resentfully, half anxiously, but choked down their tears. Selma told the grandmother to feed the children and put them to bed. When she looked out again, the strange carriage could no longer be seen. It had seemingly been driven behind one of the outbuildings. Some men now came through the door and groped their way into the room. Selma stood waiting in the middle of it. Two men, clad in heavy coats and winter caps, came forward. They kept their caps on and both of them had guns. One of them remained at the door, the other advanced a few steps toward the middle of the room and asked, abruptly, "Where is Kruhkle?"

"He is not at home."

The man laughed. "We know that already. That's easily said."

Selma felt an iron hand at her heart, but she smiled, undisturbed. "Of course it's easily said, because it's the truth." And, after a slight pause, she added, "What do you want of him?"

"We'll tell that to him," replied the rough stranger.

"Well, you'll have to wait, then. Sit down," rejoined Selma. The stranger thereupon drew a chair from a corner and sat down. The other man remained immobile at the door.

"I believe I have seen you before," murmured Selma, in an attempt to make conversation, but she was wary, for she did not like the looks of these strangers. The one at the door said nothing at all. The other one, at the table, had pushed his cap up on his forehead and was peering into the darkness. In his right hand he held the gun. His left was impatiently drumming on the table.

The drumming pierced Selma's breast like a knife. It seemed to be a hard word meant for her. She pressed

must be postponed, on account of the mourning—and—and—both parties will have time to think matters over.”

Professor Gori stood there dumb and silent. The irritation and embarrassment which all this talk caused him was precisely of the same nature as the unpleasant feeling due to that hidden seam beneath the armpit of his tight frock coat. The conversation seemed to him put together just as that torn cloth had been mended, and needed to be regarded with the same secret care for the rough and ready attempt at repair. Were the talk not carefully restrained, were it not composed with the greatest caution, there was danger that the hypocrisy below it would be revealed, and that these fine gentlemen would appear in their true characters, just as if the sleeve of that frock coat should suddenly come loose and leave evident the bare reality which existed.

For a moment the professor felt a need to escape from the oppressive atmosphere about him and from the curious sense of annoyance imparted, in his bewilderment, by the little white birds embroidered on the collar of the old lady's black dress. Every time he saw little white birds like those, he remembered, he knew not why, a certain Pietro Cardella, who used to keep a haberdashery shop in his home region, and who had an enormous tumor on his neck.

He was ready to snort aloud, but caught himself in time and only murmured, stupidly, “Well, well—poor little daughter-in-law!”

The reply was a chorus of commiseration for the girl. The professor suddenly felt stung to action and demanded, with much irritation, “Where is she? May I see her?”

Signor Migri indicated one of the doors of the parlor. “Out there, if you wish,” said he. And Professor Gori went out thither, furiously.

There, on a little white bed, stark and rigid, lay the body of Cesara's mother, wearing an enormous starched cap. As Professor Gori entered the room, he at first saw only the corpse. He was at the mercy of a growing irritation, he felt confused and bewildered, his head was going round and round. He felt that he could not allow the stupid

and cruel pettiness and meanness which were about him to pass unnoticed.

The rigidity of the poor, dead woman seemed a sort of adornment, as if she herself had assumed it and had placed herself on that bed, with her immense starched cap, to take to herself the ceremony which had been prepared for her daughter. Professor Gori was almost tempted to call to her, "You are on the wrong road, dear, old friend of mine! This is no time for jests like these!"

Then, looking again, he saw Cesara Reis, who was sitting on the floor, her head on her knees, her face hidden. She was very near the bed where her mother was lying. She was no longer weeping, but seemed plunged in a stupor. Amid her disheveled black hair, here and there a lock appeared still enveloped in curl papers, placed there the evening before to prepare her hair for the wedding day.

In the face of that piety, even, Professor Gori felt something like contempt. He felt an overmastering impulse to draw the girl back to earth, to shake her free from her heavy torpor. She should not yield to a fate so iniquitously favored by the hypocrisy of those people in the next room! No, no! Everything was ready, everything was fully prepared. Those gentlemen yonder had come there, like himself, in frock coats, all dressed for the wedding. Well, a simple effort of the will would suffice to accomplish the necessary result. He would make that poor girl, lying prostrate on the floor, rise to her feet. Half-numbed, half-torpid, as she was, he would lead her, compel her, to finish this wedding ceremony and save herself from dire ruin. For it was perfectly clear to the professor that danger was menacing this girl's life, should she be deserted at this critical moment by those whose indifference to her fate had been so clearly revealed.

That necessary effort of the will which the professor had thought of would unmistakably oppose the wills of all those relatives yonder. And as Cesara, almost without moving her head, almost without lifting an eyelid, feebly indicated her mother's body with a feeble gesture of her limp hand, saying only, "You see, Professor!" the pro-

"Don't worry! Have no fear! Everything will come out well. I must go with Papa. Just a little way—I shall soon come back. Both of us will soon come back." She took a little packet from the trunk and pressed it into her mother's hand, whispering, "Here's a little money, the children's baptismal certificates, our wedding rings——"

"My God, child, what does all this mean?" trembled her mother's voice.

"Be quiet! Don't wake the children! Be still. All will be well—all well——"

"If you want to come, come along," called the stranger from the other room, and Selma hastened out.

Kruhkle and his wife went out first and were followed by the two strangers. A wagon was behind the stable. As they were mounting it, a third man suddenly stood up. He had been lying down in the wagon and pointed his gun at Kruhkle and his wife as if he were aiming at them. Seeing there was no fear, he lay down again in the wagon. The latter was wide and comfortable. It was like the kind that householders had formerly used for their picnics and hunting.

The leader of the crowd indicated a place in the wagon for the arrested man and his wife. He ordered the man who had been asleep in the wagon to place himself in the rear and mounted to the driver's seat, beside the third man, who held the reins, placing himself so that he could watch his prisoner and the road at the same time. The wagon then started.

As Kruhkle made a remark to his wife, the leader rudely ordered, "Silence! Arrested people must not talk!" And two gunbarrels were thrust like a wall between the two prisoners. The guards kept the guns in this position for a time, but after a while one man withdrew his gun and the other followed his fellow's example. The man on the seat turned from the captives to the driver, and lit a cigar. A few low words were exchanged between the two. Selma felt the form of the guard behind sinking deeper and deeper onto the floor of the wagon. The guard was soon snoring soundly.

As the wagon whirled onward, the horses racing madly,

the driver pulled on the reins and urged on the nags still more. "Come, come, now. More speed! Get along, there! Go on, there! Lively, now, lively!"

Kruhkle bent over toward his wife. "That fellow's driving like mad," he murmured in a low tone. "He seems to have done nothing all his life but drive horses to death."

"Yes," returned Selma, whispering, and looking into her husband's eyes she saw that he was smiling.

He again bent toward her, whispering, "There's nothing to fear!"

"I know it," she answered, confidently. But her husband's smile only made her uneasy and she doubtfully shook her head. "What do we know about it?" she asked. But she whispered to her husband to keep silent, and clasped his hands fast in her own.

During the day, Kruhkle, seeking seed corn, had wandered a good way off, and had heard one thing and another. He had formed the opinion that this terrible power, which for the moment menaced everybody, stood upon feet of clay and must collapse, not only because nobody believed in it any more, but also because nobody any longer feared it. A power which is scorned ceases to exist.

He had started home in good spirits, for his quest had been successful. He had found more corn than he had expected to, and the find had lifted a heavy burden from his shoulders. If he could sow all he had obtained, he could be assured of food enough for the next winter, and he would be thus somewhat relieved of immediately pressing necessities. Life seemed about to bloom again.

The stresses and strains of recent years had accustomed Kruhkle to reflect on many things and test his opinions. Whenever, living far from centers of education and culture, in remote Livonian towns or in obscure villages of Russia, he could get hold of an old newspaper, the view which the latter reflected of the world seemed as strange as that shining forth from a cloudy and obscure mirror. The view he thus obtained, however, was confirmed by the experiences he had had. He had thus learned to observe and weigh men. His schooling, though, was long and severe.

On leaving home, the measure which he applied to

things and people was a very limited one. A native instinct made him approach men only as necessity demanded in giving them support. He did not wish to lose his ability to aid others. He had always been a giver rather than a taker, and he did not know how to ask for aid. His requests were either unheard, or were presented with so much haughtiness that they were rejected with equal pride. It was the same with many of his companions. He had beheld, on the one hand, difficulties so great that those who endured them broke beneath their terrible burdens. And, on the other hand, he had observed an incomprehensible hardness of heart and indifference manifested by many, many men. His enforced flight from home had been a great catastrophe. Life had been giving way before him as the Red Sea had retreated before the rod of Moses. Now it poured back into its old bed with added weight and power. Everything once gained was now sucked deeply downward, buried and whirled into oblivion. Some people suffered and the others were spectators of the pain. But to witness suffering and to suffer oneself are two very different things.

The first urge to renewed activity was the very difficult situation in which Kruhkle found himself. Whether it was his fault or not made no difference. And, in helping himself and scorning fate, Kruhkle found such strength within him as he had never even hoped to possess. From a suffering man he became an observer. He was thus helped, not only to forget trouble, but to experience a certain species of enjoyment. All this, however, was but half a recovery. The study of men demanded keenness and judgment. It supplied lifelong schooling.

During the practice of his calling, Kruhkle had learned to observe nature, animals and the soil. He thought that he understood them well, yet he was always being surprised by something new, something unforeseen, something unexpected. How strangely intelligent did the beasts of the field appear, when once relieved of burdens and left free to exercise their native cunning, that effective weapon of the oppressed!

With men, was not that principle even stronger?

Approach a man with the question, "What can I take from you? How can I get something out of you?" and the man will close himself against you as the blossom of the hop plant closes itself against the evening twilight. But such questions are by no means necessary. One may ask, "What kind of a man are you? What have you felt, suffered, experienced? In the struggle for existence have you lost hope and the joy derived from labor, or are these feelings tenfold stronger in you? Have you buried your inheritance in a narrow and egoistic life, or have you employed all your keenness to increase and enlarge it? How much have you known, how much have you learned to read of the deeply lying lessons contained in the book of life?" For the key to existence is obtained not from preoccupation about oneself, but from love manifested toward one's fellows. A glance into the soul of a man is like a cleft made in a rock or cliff, revealing hidden strata in all their original freshness.

People considered Kruhkle intelligent. This quiet man of Courland was thought to have the power of touching the hardest of hearts. But to ordinary people intelligence meant only craft and the subserving of one's own interest.

"How am I really intelligent?" asked Kruhkle of himself. He knew that he perceived the relations of things only obscurely, and as if groping in mist. The more he felt these relations, the less did he perceive himself. The aid which he received unexpectedly he regarded as a loan, which he must return with interest. When he had discharged his obligations, he felt as if he had received rather than as if he had suffered deprivation. His heart was more at rest.

He had returned home full of gratitude, and fully aware of obligations placed upon him. There he found ruined homes, wreckage and destruction. The fields were mined with trenches, their soil upturned with shot and shell. The fruitful soil was deeply buried under refuse, as were the hearts of men. Everything fruitful and healthy was spoiled, and envy and hate were battenning as in a festering wound. Those who have no sunshine in their hearts only make life dark for others. Why must this be so? Why must men, when sunken in error, scatter poison on

every hand? Or, in reality, do these things become fact only in the heat of frightful combats, struggles for clear vision?

Kruhkle was no stranger to such combats. His thoughts had wandered far. He had hated and damned, scorned and cursed. Finally, he felt that he had come closer to the truth of things. He felt in his soul strength enough to heal all wounds and sorrows. Yet the way to such knowledge is rough and steep. The formation of power and spirit progresses slowly, very slowly.

So they whirled on through the night. Why? Whither? Near by were men who turned away from him, in order to hide their faces. Who were they? What were their thoughts? Where did their hate come from, that hate that had turned their hearts to stone? Had the witch's curse of old fairy tales worked a spell upon those hearts? How could the latter be restored to life? How could these men be made to see their error? By talking to them? By discussion? By telling them that they were losing their own capacity? Kruhkle ceased his reflections.

The numberless stars were burning in the heavens. The Milky Way was stretching in a pale pathway across the celestial vault. On the left lay a wood. The white trunks of the birches shimmered through the gloom like floating fabrics. On the right there stretched away a field, where mounds of snow pierced by the dark earth glittered mysteriously. Everything was marvelously alive. Chaos was reclaiming its own. Memories and fancies were only the material for new creations.

A sudden feeling of warmth flowed through Kruhkle's soul. He bent over to his wife and whispered, "Selma?" The word was put more like a question than an exclamation. It suggested memories of things now far away, of experiences lived through long ago. He raised his finger and silently pointed to the wood and field, as if he would ask, "Do you remember?"

She nodded. She knew. She remembered that far-distant evening, the first one of their united life. Kruhkle, who had gone to the next town on business, had met Selma's father there. He had asked if he might not accompany

coat to the merchant from whom he had rented the garment. And then, his signature! As a witness, he had to sign!

When the church ceremony, ~~so essential for full accomplishment of the marriage~~, had been quickly finished, the newly married pair and their four witnesses went back to the bride's house. They were greeted with glacial silence. GORI tried to make himself as small as possible, took a peep into the parlor and then, turning to one of the guests, whispered close into his ear, "Er—would you mind getting my sleeve for me that I threw away in the room there a little while ago?"

And, as he went softly away, a few moments later, carrying the sleeve wrapped up in a newspaper, he reflected that, after all, he owed his conquest of fate to the sleeve of that selfsame tight frock coat he had so much detested. For had not that same frock coat, with the sleeve sewed up beneath the armpit, so irritated him, he would certainly, in the upset condition produced by the disturbance of his quiet, regular and monotonous existence, have accepted the shock of that unexpected fatal event without a murmur, like an imbecile, and with an inertness which would have allowed that poor girl to remain forever unhappy. By the grace of God, though, he had obtained the courage and strength to rebel and to conquer, and from the very irritation caused him by his tight frock coat!

SIGNOR GIACOMINO'S LITTLE SLIP

By ADA PETTINI

THE great clock on the massive tower rising high above the municipal palace standing at the entrance of the old Italian town struck the hour slowly with its huge, deep-toned bell. It was eight o'clock in the evening. The sound rolled, echoing, out into the valley where the last gleams of daylight were fading away. Its vibrations seemed to remain prolonged in the subdued chattering of swallows already returned to their nests for the night, while all the electric lights suddenly shone forth together in the narrow streets winding between the dark, high buildings of the place. Here and there, gleamed the small shops where groceries and food could be purchased, and the market-place and windows of the town were alight. A few moments later all the church bells, great and small, announcing supper-time, resounded, now near at hand, now far away, with peals first strident and sharp, and then with tones more deep and muffled. A tremor of life ran along the principal roadway, from one end to the other. This was the Via Alberghi, and all the big double doors which lined it were now open, allowing the evening breezes to rustle at each one and to bear away with them the warm, soft, mild and tempting odors from the most delicate kitchens which one could imagine.

An automobile now arrived. Throbbing, pulsing, it filled the street with its nauseous vapors, and stopped in front of the Garelli *pension*, one of the most popular hostelrys in the town. The persons descending from the car, mingled with others who had loitered up, formed a group whose murmurs resounded confusedly together. Then, with greetings and words of hasty appointment for the morrow, the single group divided. Some of its components wandered toward the Flora Inn, others to the Bellavista, while

a good many entered the big Garelli house, which was bright with lights and gay with flowering plants.

The prospect of dinner banished the readers from the reading room and interrupted the games of checkers and cards, begun as a means of forgetting the heat of the July day. That prospect produced many sighs of relief, for now everybody would be assembled around the good table and could for a few moments forget fatigue, pain, distress and the other annoyances incident to the place, which was a famous hydro-mineral resort sought out by all sorts of people for all sorts of diseases.

In five minutes more, the tower clock repeated the eight slow and deep bell strokes. It was answered by prolonged peals resounding in every key from the clocks of all the hostelrys about and, when the bells of the simpler houses had ceased, that of the aristocratic Grand Hotel, which lay in large grounds outside the town, echoed through the town in prolonged and distant tones. A few people straying late at the close of the warm afternoon, and here and there a little chamber-maid, in white apron and starched cap, hastened along the street and then all activity ceased. All the big double doors were closed, and only silence reigned throughout the main highway, now left in peace.

In his room on the second floor of the Garelli *pension* Signor Giacomino Franchi, a type of scrupulous exactitude, of modest elegance and of methodical ways, was turning about to view himself in his mirror. He was ex-vice-librarian of the Ministry of Marine and had been visiting the Garelli *pension* for the last ten years, where he drank the mineral water and took his shower bath every morning. Now his hair was brushed to perfection, his tie knotted impeccably, and his gray suit had not a single untidy fold in it. Very good. Signor Giacomino stuck a flower in his buttonhole, moistened his handkerchief in *eau de cologne*, imparted a final polish to his nails and gave a touch of the brush to his little beard, which had very few white hairs in spite of the signor's fifty years. Everything was quite complete. Signor Giacomino stepped to the door of the next room and called, "Nora!"

ground. A salvo of shots rang out near by. He leaped into a thicket and hid himself. He could see two forms standing close together. More shots were heard. One of the forms fell down. The other, the form of a woman, remained erect. More shots resounded. Still she stood there. It was frightful. The man could not look on. He stooped down and covered his face with his hands. He seemed to remain there for days, years, an eternity. More shots still. Then all was quiet.

The man now ventured to remove his hands from his face. He saw three men digging in the hard earth. The hard earth rang as the shovels struck against it. The man did not dare to stir. All was finally over. The three men threw their shovels and guns into the wagon, and drove away. They passed close to the watcher. They were covered with sweat, and wiped it from their brows. One of them spat. They drove away as fast as the horses could run.

The man came to life, and took to flight. He plunged over tree stumps, through heaps of snow through which his footsteps crashed, over earthy mounds covered with thin ice, and ran, ran, ran, until his violently throbbing heart compelled him to a halt. He stood still a moment, as if listening. And then, very slowly, and concealing himself in the thickets of the wood, he crept back to the spot where the terrible event had occurred.

He crept onward, on tiptoe, like a thief.

He saw every impression made in the ground and noticed every broken twig.

The grave lay between two pine trees. At one corner of the grave he remarked the gay fringe of a shawl. Green, red and yellow, it was shining against the freshly turned earth. He scraped the yielding sand to form a little furrow, gently placed the fringe within, and smoothed the earth over it again. The sand covering the freshly dug grave seemed still warm. He drew from his pocket a knife and carved a cross in the bark of the young pine tree that stood at one end of the grave. When this was completed, he carved another in the pine tree standing at the other end of the grave. Tears were rolling down his cheeks.

AT THE WITCH'S TAVERN

By PAVILS ROSITIS

DREAMS possess the enchanting power of taking men into places which, but for this kindly guidance, they can never attain. So conducted I paid, and only a short time ago, a visit to hell, to the real and actual hell, and such a hell as has convinced me through and through that I could never find the way there if dreams had not pointed out my road. I had never before had a glimpse of the real hell that exists, and I am quite sure that I shall not see such a hell even after I die. However, hell in relation to my future may as well be ignored. It will be quite sufficient to occupy myself with my memories and the way in which they were formed.

On an evening in June, that month when the nights are shorter than a rabbit's hind leg and the days longer than eternity, my limbs were fairly sinking under me after a tramp which had continued for many a mile. My nose was suffering especially, for the dust and dirt of the road had made my glasses unbearably heavy. This burden had quite diverted my attention from the lovely perfume of the flowers all about me. I remained perfectly cold to everything and refused to be affected by the sweet pervasive influences of the gathering dusk. My long, loose hair was heavy on my head and sometimes got into my eyes. This did not trouble me. My hair was my pride and joy, and quite distinguished me from ordinary wanderers straying upon the highways. I was a pilgrim, and must bear upon my shoulders both the finest beauty conferred by Nature, and the grimmest dust bestowed by my travels afoot.

The paling glow of evening overtook me amid fruitful fields, which still lay about me as they had lain all day long, beside the road down which I had come. My face and hands were burning hot, for in these June evenings

the sun beat down mercilessly. Through my eyeglasses I gazed over the green fields to the gray roofs of huts and dwellings, which shrank almost down to the ground. I had decided long ago to content myself, upon my pilgrimage, with the very same sort of roof which God provides for the stag in the forest and for the lark of the fields, but joy came over me, trembling through every nerve, as I thought of the cozy night's shelter which was now awaiting me. My knapsack was very light now, and all the fatigue of my spirit yielded to the relief sweeping through my frame. My feet grew light as I hastened on towards those welcome roofs, and I could feel my tongue stirring within my mouth in anticipation of the good meal before me. Beneath my tread, the wayside pebbles flew humming into the distance like affrighted bees as I struck them carelessly with my foot. Hurrying on my way to seek the night's hospitality, I was like a wild beast moving hungrily forward on the trail of prey. The loveliness of the scene about me and the magic of the night utterly faded from my consciousness.

Yet, when I reached the door of the only inn within sight, my limbs almost sank beneath me with despair, for through the dust upon my glasses I made out the words on the sign of the inn: "The Witch's Tavern." To resort to such a place! How was it possible! Could I venture to pass my hoped-for reposeful night in such an obviously doubtful retreat as this?

Weariness, however, made me indifferent and the pangs of hunger had to be stilled. My reluctance departed, and I slowly opened the creaking door. There, in a large room before me, sat a man reading from a book placed upon a large table. The book was massive and thick. His dark hair was falling down over his forehead, and all I could make out at first was his tousled head, suggesting the vague blackness of a well-charred tar barrel. He had not been aware of my entrance, and continued his reading without paying the slightest attention to me. So I walked well into the room and called, deliberately, and in a good, loud voice, "Good evening, mine host of the Witch's Tavern!"

ing able to struggle and win out against the slowly advancing malady.

Nearly every one talked of good times gone by, times when health was good, times when the insidious disorders had not yet appeared. Nearly every one was interested in his own difficulties and rejoiced to know that others had suffered or were suffering, also. All had come to seek from the marvelous waters of the place strength to live a little better, or a little less badly, than they had been living. Every one scrupulously followed, in utter obedience, their medical prescriptions, their faith absolute and ingenuous, or else manifesting the pessimism induced in them by a prolonged, fruitless struggle.

Over there was a big man who must have made his fortune in business, because he talked of the stock exchange, big establishments and millions. He wore an enormous brilliant in his tie and a magnificent diamond ring on his finger, which was oddly deformed by the gout. He talked very loudly and his jests were sometimes vulgar. His wife, a fat little woman, glittering with gold and precious stones, kept him in check with warning glances.

Over toward the center was a suave priest, full of compliments and evidently at home in society, who talked to everybody as he turned his head right and left with graciousness and charm. Near him was a languid lady whose face bore the signs of a terrible malady, but who was luxurious in the silks and laces about her still supple figure. She ate very little, smiled discreetly at the priest's remarks, and allowed herself to be stared at by an elegant young man sitting opposite to her.

The young man talked well, slightly raising his head and very fine dark eyes as if finding inspiration in the act. The talk indicated that he was a man of law and aspiring to some electoral post. Besides, he was greatly interested in politics and elections. He was replied to by a noble Sicilian senator, in a manner admitting of no contradiction. The honorable senator's face was fat and pale and every one listened when he spoke, even the suave priest.

There appeared an aristocratic couple. The wife had the washed-out, listless face accompanying sterility and was

dressed very carelessly. The man's face was still vigorous and his glance acute. He was all solicitude for his desolate companion of a life in which the only thing missing was a child. Farther along, there were a couple typical of perfect affection. The young husband was prematurely old from suffering, and his pretty little wife smiled at him continually, to divert him and make him also smile. He replied a trifle wearily, but often pressed his wife's hand and looked tenderly into her eyes.

Typical provincials were not lacking. There were wealthy country people, dressed up for the occasion in tailor-made clothes. The hands of the men revealed the farmer, or the cattle raiser, and their faces showed shyness of their surroundings.

The servants trotted here and there without ceasing. They served the chicken, the sausage, the grill, the dessert, and never ceased being elegant and gracious. They pretended not to hear the somewhat coarse expressions uttered by some wornout old man, who was very fond of his food and whispered to them when they served him.

Nora could see again the long, disorderly table in the orphanage, where she had been placed after her father's death and where she had remained, as teacher, after her mother died. Now her uncle had invited her to take a little rest from the fatigue of her teaching, and to enjoy fresh, country air, while he was taking the treatment, as usual, at the resort. Nora thought of the unkempt table, the cotton tablecloth, the numbered napkins, the cheap glasses, the coarse tin plates, all laid hastily on the table.

She viewed herself retrospectively, a humble, assistant teacher, seated at the end of the long table, eating but little of very poor food, partly because she was obliged to oversee the children. She could almost smell the sickish odor of the bacon soup, the peculiar one which is commonly perceptible in an assembly of poor school children, and the subtle flavor imparted by fustian and coarse shoes. She threw a glance of gratitude toward her uncle, who had brightened her simple existence with the luxury of this fine *pension*. Her uncle appeared absorbed in the account of the red-faced lady's hepatic colic.

Ah! Nora was not sick, and wanted to enjoy life a little; to enjoy the sensation of being served, of eating well, and of being looked at, not as she had been looked at so long in the gloomy orphanage, but as the only healthy young woman present in a roomful of sick people. She tasted the pleasure of being curiously looked at by the old, honorable, Sicilian senator, and enjoyed the paternal glance of the suave priest. She reveled in the sense of enjoying herself in the midst of the suffering, in the feeling she had of being perfectly well, young and strong, and in allowing herself to dream of being wealthy and of being no longer obliged to gain her livelihood by teaching in an orphanage.

The dinner finally ended. Signora Euphemia disappeared. The servants slowly began to clear the table and to serve coffee to those who wanted it, flitting here and there, and replying to the jokes and badinage. Uncle Giacomino had risen. Oh, oh! He was offering his arm to the red-faced lady. Nora noticed that the lady was not old, in spite of her blond wig, and smiled at her uncle, whose ears were actually purple. Everybody went down into the parlor on the ground floor, to play games, gossip and listen to a little music, if any one should chance to provide it. Nora could play the piano and played a march which gave the orphans rhythm for their gymnastics. The march had a very good effect, and Nora was loudly applauded. The lady in the blond wig came to shake hands with her. "It was lovely, that nocturne. It touched me. It reminded me of moonlight nights, when my liver was not affected." And then the lady presented her sister, a Countess Cenni, a dark little woman, rather thin, but full of dignity. They were there rather for preventive treatment of their nephew than for themselves.

The nephew came forward. Nora looked wonderingly at this being, a youth of uncertain age, somewhere between fifteen and twenty years, to judge from his beardless, freckled face crowned with long, stiff and reddish hair. The boy's shoulders were round and his chest hollow. He said a few words in a rather feeble voice and sat down near the piano, looking at his respectable aunts with a glance of inquiry. "Yes, dear," said the "red aunt," "talk a

"Put him in the ghosts' hole!" said the one-eyed old fellow. At this remark I recoiled as if a snake had bitten me. Perhaps the scoundrel thought I had money with me and had the intention of taking it all for himself, after causing me to have no need of money in the morning. Although my lot in life was by no means so excellent that my existence was worth preserving, I decided that I might as well be on my guard. When I reached my queer room, I took the light and carefully examined the flooring and the walls. Finding nothing wrong there, I next looked to the door. The door could readily be secured from the inside, by means of a heavy bolt. I was well secured against all surprises, for if any one tried to enter by the window I should surely hear the noise. I depended upon my handiness and strength, which were not to be despised. Walls, floor and bolt served well to oppose the old witches' inn-keeper, and I felt no further sense of anxiety on his account. I was ready to forget everything, quite overcome by fatigue and the dark liquor which I had swallowed. It is true, however, that, except for these things, I should have lain awake, trembling for my skin all night. As a matter of fact, I was not at all sure about the harmlessness of the one-eyed old tavern keeper.

As I lay there in my bed, I reflected that the spicy roast pork and the heavy liquor were the very best means of putting me out of commission, and that the old man had need neither of strength nor of craft if he wanted to get the best of me. That comforting idea was the last thing I remembered, for I soon sank into a sleep as deep as that of the grave.

Straightway the bed began to shake like a coffin on a hearse, and a hole opened just above it in the ceiling. The one-eyed host glided into the room through the hole. His single eye was now in the middle of his forehead and glowed in the dark like a coal of fire. He lightly leaped to the floor close by my bed, snorting and stamping like a frightened horse. The young woman who had brought in the roast and shown me to my room last night now also came slipping through the hole above. Her garments were shining like those of a true witch and we were all suddenly

transported to a wide and sunny plain, upon which wild plants were waving to and fro like blue and violet whips.

The witch fetched the one-eyed tavern keeper three good blows with a stick she carried, and changed him into a coach drawn by two fiery black horses, whose nostrils were widely distended with their wild snorts. The witch seized my hand and we both mounted inside the coach. She struck the coachman's seat with her staff, immediately creating a coachman, and the latter turned round and asked, "Where to, my lady?"

"Straight to hell, and don't spare the whip!" And the coachman laid the whip on the horses lustily. We dashed over the burning plain like a cyclone. Not a sound could be heard as we flew onward. Black cats darted to and fro around us like shuttles through wool, and turned somersaults in the air. From the gray stretches of the plain they rose as the soft satin hoods of priests rise above the heads of people gathered in a throng. Under these dark, satiny clouds surely lay the breeding places of all the good and evil in men's souls. The onward flight was so swift that I was breathless, but the witch's face bore an expression of the profoundest satisfaction. I was sorry for the poor horses, and said to the witch, "Can't the driver have a little mercy with his whip? Why, the horses are your husband!"

"Quicker! Quicker! I want to take my youthful fling out of him. This is the only way I can warm him up. He's cold as a snake unless he's whipped."

"Well, you'll only make him grow older!"

"There are plenty of young ones where we are going, plenty of hot young blood, out yonder!"

The horses' backs were flecked with foam as we drew up before a brightly lighted mansion. A throng of servants at once surrounded us, their readiness seeming to show that they had been engaged in their occupation for an eternity. The horses were led away to the stables, which were in a courtyard full of equipages just like ours. Over a flight of stairs, hung with the softest of satin, the witch, gliding onward like a serpent, led me on into the mansion, the heads of the cringing servants bowing low be-

fore us at every step we made. All about us rang out the voices of joyous guests and the house we were entering was like one where every one was gay as at a wedding. We seemed to have arrived at the moment when the long, tiresome ceremony was finished and the first real gayety of the night was beginning.

I sought to reason with myself and to convince myself that the many-voiced cries I heard were not sounds of joy, but wails of woe, for was I not in hell, a place where every voice utters sorrow? Huge paneled doors swung open before us and we swept on into a magic temple hung and painted with dark red hues. The witch was immediately surrounded by a host of gallant adorers, among whom I noticed rulers, sages, spendthrifts, priestly fathers of the church and founders of unselfish creeds. Their bearing was lofty and majestic, but their eyes glittered with fathomless passion. My uncanny companion floated among them like a legendary butterfly, causing the lips of her admirers to give forth flaming flattery. The rulers ascribed to her all the good fortune of their realms. The generals owed to her their invincible armies. To the creators of creeds, she seemed a glimmer issuing from eternal Heaven, and the bald-headed fathers hailed her as the mother of the universe.

The witch remained wholly unmoved by all these flatteries, which proceeded from greedy and weary lips. She hastened to the youths who were roaring like tigers in a corner of the hall. She vanished from my sight among them and I saw her no more. In spite of the cups, brimming with perfume, which were held out to me by many hands, and notwithstanding the marvelous fragrance rising to my face from the red lips of loveliest ladies, I kept a tight rein upon myself, for I knew that I was in hell. I did not wish to surrender to the power of the sinful lusts of these strange beings, and did my very best to remain cold to all I saw.

It has always been a habit of mine, when chancing to be in bad or menacing company, to seek to identify possible friends or foes, so as to forget my own sadness by seeking some and avoiding others. I now followed, or tried to follow, this habit, but I was a stranger to all that com-

pany, and all that company was strange to me. Intelligence, caught up from my previous life, made me wary of the throng, from whom I determined to hold myself aloof.

The passionate maidens laughed me to scorn, saying that I was only a herdsman's lout, sorrowfully searching for a stray lamb lost far within some gloomy forest. They said that an odor of sheep proceeded from my garments and that my eyes were dark with the shadows of the woods. They begged me to caress them in the grass like white ewes, for the grass was soft as satin. The worldly powers about me laughed aloud in ridicule, but I swallowed it all as I would vinegar.

A general movement suddenly occurred in the great hall and, from a door at one side, a massive and noble-looking old man entered, wiping the sweat from his brow with a gold embroidered handkerchief as he advanced. The lofty ones about fell upon their knees as they approached him, bending low that they might kiss the tips of his shoes. He did not cease his progress onward, but walked straight toward me, for I was the only one there still remaining erect among all the bowed backs of earth's mighty men.

"Why do you stand rooted there?" he asked calmly.

"I do not understand what all this means," I replied with a trembling voice.

"The eternal spectacle of the joys of the world."

"I was told that this was hell."

"It is the pleasure resort of the powers of hell."

"Where are the pains of hell we hear about in the world?"

"We hear about in the world!" he laughed, and then stopped short, as a scornful smile flitted over his face. "Pains of hell! Perhaps they exist in heaven. I don't know anything about it. Here only those are to be pitied who array themselves against us and refuse to prostrate themselves before our person and order."

"Then the tales of hell's sorrows are only lies?"

"Here we punish only those disobedient to us. We do so by driving them away until they are convinced of their error. Such people serve as examples to the rest of us."

"Have you no unhappy ones here at all?"

plied the young girl, feeling a constraint which she could not explain. "Every one must encounter difficulties and meet them with courage. I am twenty-five years old, and I know what it is to struggle. I have had to make my own living and support my two little sisters. My work has been tiring, painful, often dry and uninteresting and poorly paid. It has lasted for years, and may last all my life. It is monotonous and never changes, and, if I had not reacted against it, it would have consumed all my energy, all my gayety and all my ideals. I am strong because I must be strong."

"But why do you fatigue yourself like this?" asked the youth, still looking at the young girl with mingled curiosity and shyness.

"Why? To be independent. To know that I can live by my own efforts. And because my sisters are still small and have need of me." Nora was speaking, but the young man was no longer listening. He was thinking of those energetic words he had just heard, of the frank expression of commiseration and of the wise counsels which had almost frightened him. "Be a man," Nora had said. Why not, in fact, free himself from his solicitous aunts, why not rebel at all this stupid medical treatment, why not look about him, why not enjoy life, why not behold, with really open eyes, this gay, blooming, healthy young woman who had talked with him? Why not embrace her and give her a kiss full on the mouth, in a real human burst of desire and passion? Why not enjoy life for himself, as all youths of his age did, who had drunk from the cup of love with eager lips? And if—and if—at the thought he reddened, trembling at the soft contact with the girl's hair so lightly brushing across his forehead and at the touch of her hand—if he should become perfectly well and strong, would Nora have him if he should fall in love with her? And he approached more closely to her, as if to divine her reply. Nora drew back, blushing. "I did not intend to speak out like this," she said, her voice in a tremble. "I have said too much, perhaps. I only wanted to speak a bit of your manner of living, advise you to have a little pleasure in life——"

"But I," interrupted the young man, "I know what the only really fine thing in men's lives is. I have been kept a prisoner, but I know that I can love and be loved like every one else. You are the only one, though, who can aid me and rescue me. Rescue me for good, Nora, by loving me. Some day I shall be rich, and can make you my wife. Don't despise me, but have pity on me, for you are beautiful, strong and good, and I am unhappy."

Nora, who felt herself powerless to reply, felt her heart beating wildly. He would be rich some day and could make her his wife. Oh! if she need not return to that gloomy college and spend there the last days of her youth! Oh! To love and be loved! Was she dreaming! Was she merely intoxicated by her journey, by the *pension*, so different from her other dwelling, by repose and by companionship? Was she really sitting near the tennis court and left alone with a man who kneeled at her feet and kissed her hands and garments? Yes, this was you, really you, Nora, and the memory of the orphanage was already very far away, far away with the sadness of your humble, weary life. There before her was the fairy prince of childish fable, ready to deliver her, with a single word, from the fatal enchantment cast upon her. He was saying, "Nora, Nora, love me and I shall get well!"

She trembled and rose to her feet. "What shall I do? What people may not be looking at us? What about those two aunts?"

The young man answered faintly, "My aunts? They'd have to accept the situation. This afternoon, at three o'clock, when everybody is resting, come out on the terrace. You must come, for I have many things to tell you. You must come."

"Many things to tell me? Very well." And Nora promised that she would come at three o'clock.

It was the last infernal evening of a very stormy March. There were wind, rain, hail. Signor Giacomino Franchi, seated before the dining table all ready for the meal, felt very warm in his indoor clothes, smoked his pipe contentedly, and smiled to himself. In the mounting spirals

failing to observe the lovely things about me. I was sorely troubled, and fled away from that night which had now faded into the past. I wanted no more nights in any witches' inns.

JERZY

By WACLAW GRUBINSKI

THE dilapidated, wheezy locomotive gave off steam, whistled shrilly and slowly moved off. The cars followed their master hesitantly. The hum of farewells died in the distance. Hats and handkerchiefs waved a last *au revoir* to those who remained behind. A man ran after the fast-disappearing train to snatch a rose from a pretty girl leaning out of one of the car windows. The conductor jumped on the last car. The locomotive puffed and wheezed all the more as it sought to increase its speed.

Jerzy sighed deeply and wended his way to the exit of the station. The fresh air was particularly agreeable to him after the smoke-filled air of the station. He glanced about the brightly lighted square with its cabs, street cars, auto buses and motors dashing back and forth, as if rejoicing in the struggle for time. The bounteous health of his seventeen years made him long for an outlet for his forces. He readjusted his cap and set off on foot. He was tempted to take the street car, but the fascination of the bright lights and his youthful joy of living induced him to follow the crowd. Walking through the streets gave him a sense of superiority which made him feel fit for anything which life might have in store for him. As he was crossing a street corner he saw a man talking to a woman in a taxi. He was struck by the singular resemblance of the man to his father. But no, this was impossible, for he had just left his parents on the train a few moments before. Jerzy did not like to think of his father at this time. He loved his parents, but he was now to be alone in Warsaw for two or three days and he wanted to profit by his liberty. For the first time in his life he was to be allowed to shift for himself. He could take his meals in a restaurant and prepare his own breakfast as if he were a

hardened bachelor. In the evening he was to send the neighbor's servant for some bread, ham and milk. These were his mother's orders. Jerzy kissed his mother with almost undue eagerness and awaited impatiently her departure. What fun it would be to be quite free. He looked a hundred times at his watch. He finally became so eager for his first real liberty that he was forced to solve some algebraic problems to make the time pass more quickly. At last the time came for his mother to leave—ten o'clock. Soon the luggage was being put into the cab and they were off for the station. The wheeze and whistle of the locomotive were, for him, the symbols of unfettered liberty. He had now no master, no chains, no bridle; a man to whom the world could not say "don't." He could do what he wanted now. The blood surged in his veins and made his ears hum as if they echoed the resonance of the sea. His cheeks grew purplish red. Walking along the street as if on thin ice, he was the acme of suppleness, of health, of youthful energy.

It was only natural, therefore, that Jerzy should not be overjoyed to meet a man who so resembled his father. He considered taking a cab and driving to the Aleje. At this moment, however, his eye was attracted by a large café, brightly lighted. He entered. The room was filled with people, who pushed and crowded one another, seeking vainly to find a place. The air was stifling, but no one seemed to pay attention in the mad rush for a seat. The orchestra on the terrace was playing a fox trot. The perspiring waiters wormed their way through the crowd as if they were passing through a jungle, bearing nonchalantly on their heads huge trays of coffee, tea and little cakes. Next to Jerzy there was a very pretty young girl, who was joking with several men. A thin man of swarthy complexion, prematurely bald, had just greeted her. He stood with his hat in one hand, and her hand in the other. Jerzy heard him say:

"I am not lying. By God, I am not lying."

"You have chosen a good witness," replied a fat, middle-aged fellow, who appeared to be the young woman's husband.

the lady is very strong. Good evening." Matilda closed the door upon the retreating physician.

Was it possible that he had really gone away, this man, this man who had just said this tremendous thing? Chevalier Giacomino felt his head revolving and his ears roaring. He dropped into a chair, to save himself from falling, and could think of nothing at all. But he arose again as another groan came from his niece's room. The whole horrible truth was flashing before his brain. More than all else, though, he was conscious of a great grief and pain, greater than any distress he had ever before experienced. His grief was the grief of disillusionment. It was the bitter and ironic grief of knowing that Nora, the niece whom he had so much loved, and who had held such a high place in his esteem, that Nora, Giuditta's daughter, who had been so studious, industrious and serious-minded, had fallen so very, very low!

This sense of disillusionment, of betrayal, of certainty that the truth had suddenly leaped to light, rendered the timid and honest soul of the signor suddenly fierce and brutal. All his feelings abruptly melted into a deep resentment, and made him cry out, "What a shame!"

The suffering, trembling girl in the next room heard that cry, understood her uncle's words, and was cut by them as if by a knife. She rose up in her bed, sought her clothing, and, in a stifled voice, exclaimed, "I will go away, go away at once, Uncle, you are right. I won't disgrace your home. I will go right away to the hospital——" and she started to make good her words.

But her uncle entered the room and, with an expression on his face which she had never seen before said, dryly and sadly, "Close the door. You will not go away. Nobody must know. Here there are no people but ourselves—try not to cry too loudly—tell me——" and he approached the side of the bed on which she was sitting, with her limbs hanging down, her abdomen very large, her hair loose upon her shoulders, her face ashen, her hands picking at the bed clothing—"tell me just one thing. Who is your lover?"

"I have none, I have none, I swear it! I haven't seen him any more, and I have suffered so much! Months of

"Just after your parents left."

"Where is it?"

"In my room, sir, because the apartment is closed."

"Bring it upstairs," commanded the boy.

"Directly."

"I will go up ahead of you."

They went up to the second floor. Jerzy did not have to ring the bell. He proudly took out his key and, for the first time in his life, opened the door to the apartment. He amused himself going from room to room and turning on the light. He felt like a real person now. He walked twice around the oak table in the dining room and sat down in the armchair in the corner. He looked savagely at the table. He felt an irresistible impulse to kick it. He felt as if he would like to show his domination over it. He would have liked to put it in his pocket; to squeeze it in his hand, like a wet sponge; to turn it over; to drive an axe through the middle of it; to pour scalding water upon it; to do with it whatever he would like to, anything, anything! "Nobody has the right to say no to me," he thought triumphantly. "I am the master of the house."

The janitor interrupted his strange reflections, bringing a large package, enveloped in brown paper.

"Put it on the table," said Jerzy. "Here is a tip for you. Don't forget to close the door behind you."

The sleepy janitor went out, mumbling his thanks.

Jerzy cut the string with a penknife and opened the package. It contained a huge cake, almost as large as a bicycle wheel, which was daintily placed on a china plate. He stood still, regarding it for a moment. Then, slowly, he cut off a morsel and began to eat it. He walked towards the open door, a handful of cake in his mouth. He stopped. Then, as if in a dream, he gave a hasty glance in the direction of his father's bedroom. He turned on the light and entered the room, seating himself at his father's desk. His eyes fell upon an embroidered screen which hid his father's bed from the rest of the room. The young lad's eyes sparkled with joy. "I want to sleep in my father's bed tonight, and why not, after all? If I want to sleep there I am free to do so." Jerzy awoke suddenly from this strange

was sorry for him. He seemed only a child. Perhaps I stirred him, in some way, without knowing it. He said he adored me, that he was unhappy—and one day—before we left—oh, how terrible! So many years of honor, of struggles, of sacrifices, and then to fall—to fall! Oh!” her cry was stifled low as she saw her uncle withdrawing, without another word to her. “Have pity on me, have a little pity, in God’s name! Don’t drive me away, for the sake of my mother! You, who loved her so much!” And she fell back, exhausted, with a convulsive sob.

About six o’clock in the morning old Matilda entered the room in which the signor had shut himself up while awaiting the obstetrician. He had remained on his feet all night, his half-closed eyes peering through the window at the dark road outside. Old Matilda bore on her right arm, and turned slightly toward her, a small bundle wrapped up in a big Turkish towel. She placed the bundle on the bed, placed a white woolen shawl about the bundle, and opened, between the folds of the shawl, a tiny crack. “So that it can breathe,” she remarked, “without catching cold. It’s a fine girl.” And she abruptly departed, closing the door behind her.

Signor Giacomino heard it all, understood it all, and resolved to remain where he was, motionless, at the window. He looked out into the avenue, faintly visible, with other things, in the early light of dawn. He saw the big horse-chestnut trees moving slowly in the wind, and perceived the last clouds disappearing from the clearing sky. All things seemed to have become placid and peaceful, and he suddenly seemed to become aware of a voice within his heart, counseling mercy and charity. “No, you cannot abandon your own flesh and blood.” Within his honest heart he reviewed the tenderness and love he had had for Giuditta. His love had never been confessed to the woman who, ignorant of it, had not returned it. All his dreams of a family and domestic happiness had been stifled within him. Then the untimely death of his brother had brought inconsolable sorrow to the widow, who had survived her husband such a short time! The signor had strongly felt a sense of duty toward the little orphans, linked to him by a

out the baskets and placed them on the writing table. With a curious gleam in his eyes, he spread the golden coins out before him on the table. He glanced at the windows. No, the curtains were tightly drawn. He crumpled the paper covering of the coins and threw it on the floor. He thought that he would pick it up later on. He wanted to keep the secret of his adventure from his father. Meanwhile, he laughed gayly. He arranged the gold in little heaps. What a pretty picture it made. His father must have meant to pay his bills with it. He covered the gold with his hands. The thought that there were hundreds of zloty in his possession thrilled him. What nice things one could buy in exchange for this yellow metal! This handful of gold was the key to the world. Now he possessed the key to everything, everything in the world. He caressed the coins, taking them in his fingers, one by one. He could do with it as he wanted to. It merely depended upon him to decide. He laughed hoarsely. His eyes glowed with a strange, unnatural passion, almost insane. His hands perspired. His ears burned. His body trembled. His imagination conjured strange images of women, wine and song. He saw again the smiling young woman in the café and the man who accosted her. She came and sat beside him. He caressed her. He would be kind to her. Yes, he loved her. Much, yes, very much.

Jerzy shivered so that he dropped several coins which he held in his hand. He leaned over towards the safe and from a small box drew out a small oil painting. It was a picture of Leda and the Swan. It was as if Leda were the beautiful young woman. The boy's face grew hideous with passion. He placed the picture on the writing table and regarded it longingly. He was now mad, quite mad. He gnashed his teeth. He got up and began to walk aimlessly around the table. He began to wander through the other rooms. He went to the kitchen door, turned the key, undid the bolt and opened the door. The stairway was pitch dark. Across the hall a thin jet of light could be seen in the neighbor's apartment. Jerzy coughed. Then he coughed more loudly. His cough echoed on the stairway. Across the hall the door opened. A young girl appeared

in the doorway. She peered timidly into the darkness of the hall while striving to continue to mend the stocking in the half light reflected from the apartment.

"What. You aren't asleep yet?" she inquired. "Are you ill, perhaps?"

"Oh, yes," replied the boy.

"Can't I get you some tea?" offered the maid.

"Yes, some tea."

The maid hesitated. After all he was only a neighbor.

"It is very late," she countered.

"No, only half after eleven," replied the schoolboy. "I am so thirsty, and I don't know how to light the alcohol lamp."

The girl smiled.

"I have got everything," continued Jerzy, "alcohol, tea and even a nice cake. I can't eat cake without tea."

"You must pour some alcohol in the lamp," suggested the girl, "and——"

She broke off and disappeared in her apartment. Jerzy returned to the kitchen of his parents' flat and took a bottle of alcohol from the cupboard. At this moment the maid crossed the hallway and entered the kitchen. She took the bottle of alcohol from him and filled the lamp. When she tried, unsuccessfully, to light the lamp with a broken match, Jerzy demanded jokingly:

"Why didn't you close the hall door?"

His heart was beating like a sledgehammer and his thoughts grew confused. He was alone with a girl. She was even fairly pretty. He was the master. If he wanted to kiss her no one could tell him that he must not. He was the king; the despot who could act as he might choose.

The girl was saying something. Jerzy could not understand. She repeated her sentence, but once again he was obliged to demand, "What do you say?"

She drew herself up straight and looked at the boy, her yellowish mop of hair presenting a strange contrast to almost coal black eyes.

Jerzy gained control of himself. In almost normal voice he queried, "Does it burn? I mean the lamp."

The girl did not reply. Instead she silently filled the

"Well, if we get married what more do you want?"

"I certainly don't want that!" said the other aunt, who was the calmer, in a low, grave voice. "You, the last Count Cenni, the only heir——"

"Hugged by the arms of death," said the young man, "reared in plasters, with a sick liver, almost dead with boredom and abstinence—go on, dear Aunt."

"A poor——"

"School teacher."

"Neither young nor pretty——"

"But brave and ardent——"

"Shameless!"

"Oh, come now, dear Aunt, that's about enough. She is a lovely girl, who has saved me from death by sacrificing herself, poor thing. That is sure. My dear aunts, you ought to have a little gratitude. She would be company for you. She won't be pretentious, because she's poor; nor vain, since she's not pretty; nor wasteful, because she's not young; nor jealous, because—— Everything I offer will suffice, and everything you give her will be excellent. And then, dear aunts, you are still young and lovely, but some day you will be old and troublesome, and that's why the chevalier Giacomino won't ever get married. I shan't care much about being company for you and leaving my wife with you. Buck up. I have just had a letter from the college. The directors have agreed. They think that the uncle is sick, they have accepted the resignation of their faithful teacher, to occur toward the end of this year. In six months, Countess Cenni, junior, will be here in the house. She's a little angel, and you know it very well."

He expelled a mouthful of smoke, turned to admire himself in a mirror, and then looked at his watch. "Why, it's three o'clock! I must go. I'm going skating. Good-bye, dear aunts, think of the nurse. She's well paid, because she takes good care of the baby. You can go off to the mountains, and Uncle Giacomino will look after the child. I have other things to occupy me—my sports, my club, and art—theatrical art. Last night, now, there was an adorable Mimi Pinson. Good-bye, beloved aunts—I embrace you, and here's a kiss for both of you!"

The two aunts remained silent, somewhat upset, but satisfied.

"He's a fine fellow," exclaimed the red aunt. "Since—since that day he's become another man. Ah!" And with a sigh, she stretched herself out in the chair. "What lucky things men are!"

"Nora has wonderful health," murmured the black aunt. "They say that the child will be very beautiful, and she is only forty days old!"

"She'll look like me. She'll be blond, pale blond. Well, this Nora Franchi will be a better wife for him than some street vampire would be!"

"And she'll do just what we want her to!"

"She'll be a real wife, and nobody else can restrain Rodolfo in the wild pace he's going."

"If you please, the nurse is here," announced the servant.

"Tell her to come in."

The woman entered. She was a young peasant woman, with sly, black eyes. Her last baby was dead, her husband far away in Tripoli, where he was employed, all the circumstances were favorable. She was intelligent and would understand the situation.

"Good afternoon, Nurse. You have been informed, I believe, that we want to arrange about rearing the child of our poor dead friend."

"Yes, Lady."

"Dead, poor thing," repeated the dark aunt, with a sigh.

"But the father?" asked, slyly, the nurse. "Who is the father?"

The ladies looked at each other a little uncertainly.

"The lady who accompanied me," said the nurse, "told me that the father is that fine-looking young man. Is it true?"

The countesses looked at each other again, and the nurse continued, lowering her voice, "I have been also told that the mother is not dead, but that she has gone away and left the child." The ladies half closed their eyes.

"I am to say that she is dead, though. Oh, that's all right. All I want is my pay. It's nothing to me. I am poor, Ladies, and must look for myself. I give my blood, so

to speak, and bring up a fine girl, but I want three hundred lire, double pay for three months, and a coral necklace."

"Behave yourself well and you shall have everything you want. You must be prudent, you must keep your eyes open and say nothing."

"Surely, Ladies, you couldn't think——"

"The child must be kept for a year or two." And the dark aunt gave the woman a gold piece.

"Oh, my Lady! I have seen the child, she is very pretty, God bless her! Now I will go away."

And the nurse disappeared, leaving in the room an odor of dried chestnuts and rancid oil.

"Well, now," said the dark aunt slowly, "that would be a splendid solution, anyway. Supposing the child could be passed off as a natural child of Signor Giacomino?"

It was a lovely, warm, calm, clear evening, a June evening, starlit and fragrant. The wistaria vine in the little garden was in full bloom, and the chevalier Giacomino Franchi, standing at his window, was inhaling the subtle perfume. Nora, quite well again, had returned to her college. In six months Count Cenni was to marry her. She would be married by the priest and the civil authorities. However, the condition insisted on by the Cenni family was, that the dishonorable truth should remain unknown and unsuspected, and that Nora should enter that family as a virgin bride. It was on account of this condition that the child had been sent away into the country with the nurse, far away, and not to return for a long time, so that the baby might be considered the orphan of a dead family relative. This was the painful, humiliating condition which had been exacted.

Nora had accepted it, however, and her Uncle Giacomino, flushing with shame, had been obliged to bow to it. He had been greatly saddened at having to part with the baby, who had been in his house for nearly three months. Uncle Giacomino had accompanied the nurse to the station that very day. There, in his room, the baby's little crib still remained. Why! There was the night lamp, there was a forgotten package and the baby's cap! What a miserable nurse!

He collected all the things together and when Matilda came in to remove the crib, he said, "Leave it for awhile—we will think of it tomorrow." The crib was empty. The little round, red face, with its great, luminous, heavenly eyes, was no longer visible. How still the house was! This was the time for the baby's bath. And it was in the train and probably crying, and in charge of that coarse, horrid nurse. Who could tell whether that nurse would treat the baby well? Suppose she let it suffer? Here, there was at least Matilda to look out for the baby. How she would take care of it! Poor little thing! Without mother, without father—that worm—without Matilda, and without Uncle Giacomino. It was so useless that Uncle Giacomino should love that dear baby, poor innocent, who was rained down unexpectedly into his house, and brought there by a wild March tempest!

How could he sleep peacefully? It was impossible. Giacomino Franchi went to bed, but failed to sleep. He blamed the bed, the heat, the mosquitoes, but he had only a single thought. He could not live without the baby. And, early next morning, the chevalier Franchi packed his valise, saying to Matilda, "I am going on business to the region where that nurse lives. I want to see for myself how things are there."

"Excuse me, Sir, the nurse can scarcely have arrived. But you are right. The thought of the journey, and the poor baby, kept me from sleeping. It is better that you should go, Sir. And—" by this time she was calling from the staircase—"if you ever give the child to me I'll never let her get away!"

Signor Giacomino turned for a moment to put his arm around Matilda, the worthy, faithful, good, affectionate woman. That evening, the faithful and affectionate woman saw her master returning with the nurse and the baby.

"What do you think, Matilda! People may say what they like. They can say the child's mine, if they want to. Things in that miserable mountain district won't do at all. I've brought back the baby and she'll stay here."

"That man was probably the father," had opined the nurse. Now she was sure of it.

Finally she succeeded. With her hand she pushed the table aside. She cast a pitiful glance at Jerzy.

"I can kill you!" he whispered harshly.

She quaked with fear.

"I can do with you what I like, whatever I choose."

Wanda gazed at the boy with the look of a wild beast at bay. He was mumbling strange, unconnected words. She fainted once more.

Jerzy leaned over her. He shook her. This time it was his turn to be panic-stricken. She was lying motionless.

"Get up! Get up!" he screamed. She did not move. With his finger he opened her eyes, but they closed as soon as he let go of them.

"Listen! You are in my power!" he screamed.

She did not hear.

"I order you to get up. You understand? I order you to get up, and at once!"

But the girl was lying motionless.

"I want," he cried, "I want you to get up."

He jumped up and down, quite mad. He knelt down before her. He took her by the neck.

"Enough! Enough! You hear what I say? I want you to hear me. Listen! I order you to hear me!"

But the girl was lying like dead.

Jerzy jumped up and began to beat his hands against the wall, as if to seek help from this invisible devil. He ran to the table, took the gold, and, holding it in his hands, ran back to the unconscious girl. With his whole strength he threw the money at her mute body. It shivered. She uttered an almost imperceptible groan. Jerzy's fear increased. The girl began to grow stiff.

The boy continued to scream hoarsely, "Get up! Get up! Get up!"

Cold sweat covered his face. He ran screaming from room to room, mumbling and shrieking by turns. "I can do anything, anything."

He rushed to the window and opened it. The curtain fell to the floor, so precipitously did he open the lower sash. The dark night air calmed him. But there behind him she was lying. Was she still there? He dared not

look. Yes, he would look. Oh, yes, she was there, lying motionless, near the door. She was crawling. Yes, she was crawling towards the window.

Jerzy drove his finger nails deep into the window frame. Was she crawling towards him? But no, she was lying motionless as before. He was mistaken. She was coming towards him, nearer, ever nearer. He wanted to run away but he could not move his legs. Nor could he take his glance from this dreadful apparition, always moving nearer, nearer. Soon she would be beside him. Was she really moving? Yes! Yes! With a supreme effort Jerzy raised himself to the window sill and turned his face towards the dark, without. At the same moment he felt her hands on his shoulders, hands which crept stealthily towards his neck. His whole body was trembling with fright.

"I can do all I want, all, all, all," he moaned piteously.

But she! What does she want? "You are strangling me! Oh! Oh! Does nobody hear me?" Jerzy leaned still farther out of the window to escape this awful crawling thing. He began to fall into the still darkness below.

THE OTHER WOMAN

By CLAUDIO BASTO

OUTSIDE, a fine rain, obscuring the melancholy afternoon, seemed to darken the air as with a thick smoke. The feathery tops of the trees were hardly visible. Their drooping, moveless branches were contracted together like human backs humped downward the better to shed the chilly downpour. The gloomy light penetrated the windowpanes, pearly with fine raindrops, and only threw more painful shadows into the gathering darkness within the room. And Guida, pale against her white counterpane, and oppressed with a presentiment of impending doom, turned back to memory slowly, slowly, as one who would savor life as long as possible.

It was again in the winter, but now on a bright and radiant day, amid aromatic acacias in full flower casting downward their golden showers, that she and Eduardo had exchanged their first kiss. How that kiss had been imagined, enjoyed and delayed! How strange and inexplicably dear that moment, heroically braved at last, which had united those two souls by its curious, novel spell—those souls which had for so long been permitted only glances, words, silence and mere simple, occasional contacts! Ah, how clearly those moments were remembered, how distinctly they would ever be remembered! A gentle breeze, perfumed and warm, and touched, as it were, by some angelic hand, murmured low as it shook the yellow, lacy blossoms of the acacias, which now let fall a slow, fine, golden shower, and their lips were at last united as the deep blue sky stretched overhead, and as the sunlight tranquilly warmed the loveliness of the afternoon.

For it was after a moment of hesitation and shyness that Eduardo had placed a sudden, devouring kiss upon her throat. Ah, she had never dreamed of such a kiss. Palpitating with the unexpected and astounding revela-

tion, she felt her whole being enwrapped in a strange torpor and, yielding, she abandoned herself upon his breast, that strong and protecting shelter, as a fragile, slender vine twines about a sturdy tree. In the nebulous uncertainty of this strange, new dream, she experienced a premonition that their two souls must meet to melt into one. When at last she released herself from this firm, uniting clasp, and from the embrace of his dear arms, she felt that all her soul had been abandoned to him. Intoxicating and eternal, she felt the fragrance of Eduardo's being penetrate into the remotest recesses of her very soul. These things came back to her slowly, slowly.

In moments of solitary reverie which followed, it seemed to her that she was changed. Yes, indeed, she was no longer the same. The sensation imparted by those kisses, given under the dear and kindly shelter of the trees which sweetly perfumed every tender retreat within the garden, tingled in every fiber of her being. She could have no doubt of the vague anxiety and unrest, of the formless and obscure desires, and of the inexplicable attraction which she perceived for Eduardo within every atom of her soul and body. Her sentiment was one of a vague, sorrowful kind of pleasure which she enjoyed with a curious eagerness. It was allied to despair. She did not understand the strange and painfully elusive satisfaction which it gave her.

She soon began to feel herself more a part of Eduardo, more devoted to him and, in his presence, she sometimes resisted her inclination and tried to combat her temptation to kiss him. But after that first warm kiss bestowed by Eduardo, she felt herself expanding more and more. She eagerly crushed her tender breasts against his firm bosom, desiring to be clasped more closely, to be held more tightly against his flesh, and to give back to him the passionate kisses which burned upon her lips. She rested finally without a thought, lost in abstract abandon, and sustained, heavily and inertly, within Eduardo's arms, feeling withal a sense of ungratified desire. What was the meaning of this strange enigma which tortured her?

In Eduardo's absence, she experienced long dreams, now

unrelated, now gliding from one concept to another, which often left her remaining motionless in endless ecstasies. She dreamed of the many things she would tell Eduardo. Through her mind floated a thousand prayers, a thousand doubts, a thousand fears, a thousand promises. At his approach she was fascinated, without volition, without ideas, and a mysterious vibration seemed to flow through every nerve. She tried to visualize his eyes, his gestures, his mouth. In her fancy, she lifted her delicate, palpitating lips to his, desiring his kisses, feeling a frenzy of kisses uniting their moist and breathing mouths.

Yes, she remembered it all, slowly, slowly.

She remembered the inquiet, violent joy of those girlhood days. She revived, one by one and in succession without the slightest order, the different moments of that existence, recalling even those which were most trivial, as one might turn over the leaves of a beloved and well-known book, looking at the front of it, glancing at the back of it, and reading stray passages scattered here and there.

When Eduardo returned to her they became children again. They became united in an overwhelming joy which happily banished, in wild delight, the unsolved inquietude which had tortured her. How Eduardo scolded her when she told him of her unreasoning fears! How he laughed, one November day, as he presented her with a fine, ivory-handled dagger and she almost tearfully expressed vague apprehension at the thought it aroused of a sinister death! And Eduardo, still laughing, pointed to a great cluster of red blossoms, with the jesting remark that they were tragically colored with a stream of smoking blood! And he held up in the sunlight the shining blade, delicate as a stiletto, which made one shiver so as the cold gleams danced within it! How well she remembered it all! Finally, though, the dagger became a mere commonplace object, which was left lying about on the table or shamefully used to cut the leaves of books with.

Sometimes her fancies seemed strange. Sometimes curious coincidences occurred, but they were mere coincidences, as when Eduardo brought her a bunch of lovely dahlias and,

coming softly behind her, seized them and cut off their stems with the dagger. Oh, of course they got used to the dagger. Time gradually obliterated her dread of it, and it finally became a mere good companion, harmless and useful. It had been in this very room on her wedding day. Her wedding, her married life!

She was at first dazzled by her marvelous, inexpressible happiness. The brilliance about her was so great that she could see nothing, being so blinded that she could not even judge fully how happy she was. The very pupils of her eyes were so dilated by the light that she was rendered sightless. Her hands seemed to have suddenly received a shower of lovely and wonderful gems, forming a heap of glowing and indistinguishable units.

Later, she gradually began to be accustomed to her joy and could analyze her happiness. She could fully savor it now, both ardently and calmly. She could examine all its aspects, study every desire. Her whole life had become a delirium of love.

She remembered—she remembered.

The thought of dying, coming suddenly upon her in the midst of these lovely memories, filled her with infinite sadness, and she suddenly felt in her eyes the painful warmth of bitter tears.

Night was falling.

The north wind now rising began to shake the little garden with heavy gusts.

Eduardo brought in a light. The slender flame of the lamp, wavering to and fro, softly illuminated the room with flickering lights and shadows.

Guida's tears, trembling in the light of her eyes like the stars when bathed with moonlight, fell upon her face, scattering scintillations as they dropped. Eduardo watched her, greatly moved.

The gleams from these bitter tears, shining so gently and so sadly, pierced the soul of Eduardo as a beam of winter sunlight melts its way through the snow and filled him with ineffable tenderness. From the depths of the room she saw him coming. He took her face in his hands, whose gentleness somewhat dispelled her pain with their

spite of this, I used up all my cartridges firing at these black birds of prey hovering overhead on their wings loaned to them by Death. My eyes were filled with tears of absolute helplessness. How I would like to bring down one of those miserable heroes who slaughter innocent women and children!

After that they went on their way. Under the cover of night the vessel raised anchor and sailed off. Its somber outline was darker even than the shadows of night. It was not difficult for my eyes to follow it and watch it as it slipped silently over the waves and sped away into the obscurity.

All of a sudden it seemed to me that I was there quite alone by the edge of the open sea, hopeless and lost. The ocean was hidden from my eyes but its restless beating seemed to carry to my ears some word from those who had departed and who were still thinking of me.

After that I returned to the encampment. I sought to hide myself from every one and I lay down flat on my back and contemplated the heavens. The gentle ocean rain pattered against the outspread wings of my tent and seemed to be whispering something. Formerly I loved such nights as this one. This gentle whispering would then arouse my thoughts of the past and eventually bring sleep to my eyes. But at present it seemed to make me realize all I had just lost—perhaps forever.

Now we have attained Corfu and we have halted there. We thought that we had been definitely saved. But in this we made a great mistake. Every day we contemplated the digging of fresh graves. The Ypsos, lurking beneath the heavy shadows of the olive trees and the intoxicating perfume of the orange trees in full bloom, killed our soldiers in masses. Every morning we would give them up to the cemetery of the near-by church.

There lie children worthy of their native land. There the restless ocean sends back to them its mortal cry, the owl hoots its weird song above them, the orange trees decorate them with their petals which the ocean breezes detach from the branches and scatter over their graves while the near-by church embalms them in myrrh, filled with the

miserable impulses calmed for a time within her broke forth in still more ungovernable rage, releasing themselves in an indomitable burst of passion.

In a desperate attempt to distract herself, Guida determined to fix her attention on her beloved little room and the things within it, softly shining in the light. Through the window she could perceive the garden and remembered the last time she had seen that window open. Eduardo had opened it for her, and a wave of fresh coolness had entered, to temper the warmth of the room. She had felt herself enveloped delightfully in his being, full of vigorous health. She had enjoyed it, tasted it, breathed it all in. Her soul, thus fully penetrated by his very essence, had become stimulated, restored, and, voluptuously, she had allowed her glance to rove far into the velvety azure of the skies, then cast it down into the pretty garden, and buried it for a long time among the highest branches of the sweet acacia trees. Then, at a little distance from the window, she saw her table on which were her favorite books. She absorbed herself in the memory of the happy moments she had passed at that table, just at bedtime. The torment in her soul, however, continually surged forth, madly scattering, in wild disorder, all the efforts which Guida frantically made to quiet herself.

Finally, she managed to concentrate herself on the contemplation of a portrait, hanging on the wall before her. It was a large and very fine portrait, made on her wedding day. It represented herself and Eduardo, very close together and looking at each other with eyes which glowed with happiness. She feverishly sought memory after memory with which to choke down the tortures which raged violently within her heart. At her left hand, there lay her only love, her dear Eduardo, carelessly extended on the couch, sleeping honestly and healthfully, his face wholly serene. Guida feasted her eyes, full of affectionate transports, on the sweet serenity of that dear face. The immense passion for the beloved companion which gave her such joy silenced the fantasies of her diseased spirit. She lay there as if enchanted, gazing long and steadfastly upon her sole and only love.

The spirit of adoration which consoled her, gave way, after a time, and the old cares and sufferings returned, as they had so often. Her beloved Eduardo would belong to another woman. All the perturbations of her troubled soul began again to afflict her. Struggling with herself, she resumed her painfully minute examination of all the objects about her in her pretty nest, now, she felt, forever lost to her. So she continued the weary vigil, endeavoring to use her memories and dear associations to narcotize her doubts, obsessions and dread.

A bell somewhere outside began to strike midnight.

The first stroke, coming suddenly, harshly, hoarsely, pierced the night with a raucous note as loud and startling as the cry of a peacock. It struck on Guida's ear violently, rudely. The wind was stirring the trees, whose foliage swung to and fro in a stifled, mournful lament. Another and another peal rang out in a gloomy knell, tolling forth in a long, lingering echo, sadly resounding on the vibrating air.

Midnight. Guida raised herself in her bed, beside herself. Her voice seemed to be confined as within a tight, strangling knot. Her skin was covered with icy perspiration. She opened her mouth convulsively and her nostrils dilated widely with her deep and rapid breathing. She tried to cry out, to shout aloud, to summon Eduardo, but her throat contracted painfully, stifling her and rendering her silent and impotent.

The sound of the bell continued to peal out, in waves of agony. The strokes fell upon the night regularly, without interruption, imperturbably, inexorably. Midnight! Her state of anxiety was quickly exchanged for a feeling of certainty. She knew, now, beyond a doubt that the moment was the black one consecrated to deeds of evil. It was the infernal instant of unhealthy magic, of satanic rites, of witchcraft and sorcery.

Midnight! She was to die. She knew that she would never survive this noisome hour. She felt the truth, she was convinced absolutely, she knew, positively and beyond the shadow of a doubt, that her time was come. She was seized and possessed by a mighty, irresistible, disordered, superstitious obsession.

From the uncertain and nebulous gloom about her, which melted together in a confused whole the objects within the room, the fine large portrait hanging on the wall suddenly stood out in sharp and distinct relief and clearness. The portrait grew larger and larger. It danced mockingly before her vision. It became a living thing, which moved, swayed and beckoned as she gazed upon it distractedly, fascinated. Who was that woman in the portrait? Was it herself? Was that she standing there? No, no, no! Never! It was not she. It was that other, the "other woman." There stood the "other woman," close to her Eduardo's side, about to steal her Eduardo and carry him away forever.

She strained upward, stretched herself to the utmost, raised herself supremely as far upward as she could. She extended her poor, insane head toward the portrait which so evilly fascinated her. She stared fixedly at it with great, lustrous eyes, panting with dread, chill with a cold that crept remorselessly nearer and nearer to her heart.

The bell sounded forth again. Still once more. The strokes struck upon her ear only to die away faintly, ever more vaguely, finally becoming dissipated as they mingled with the murmur of the wind.

So she was to die! And the image of that other woman came there to mock and insult her at the very hour of her death! And Eduardo, close by all the time, was plunged in infamous slumber! He was probably dreaming, dreaming already, of the "other woman!" Guida stretched out a nervous, quivering hand, in a gesture of tortured menace, to threaten both her sleeping husband and the frightfully mocking portrait that danced so derisively before her. She menaced her husband fiercely as he stood beside that "other woman" in the portrait. She tugged frantically at her throat, as if to release the cruel knot that confined her larynx and stifled her cry.

She leaped from her bed. She was shivering as in a violent shock. Dizzy, tottering, ready to fall, her yielding limbs bent beneath her, almost breaking. The lamplight slowly flickered to and fro. She stretched herself forward, seizing the bedstead and clinging to it to hold herself

erect. She attempted a few wavering and uncertain steps. Then she moved forward, blindly, very directly ahead, her dressing gown falling about her in ample folds. Her hair, tumbling downward in black waves, descended in a cataract upon her bare shoulders, glided down upon her naked breast and lost itself within the surrounding shadows. Another final peal of the midnight chime rang out heavily, muffled, dull. She heard it for a long time as it echoed and reëchoed in low, diminishing and receding tones.

She tried another step forward. Groping, trembling, supporting herself against the furniture, tortured with agony, she staggered onward to the portrait where the sight of Eduardo and the "other woman" pierced her heart as with a thousand needles. She frantically kissed the portrait, and pressed her face close to it as if she would embrace her beloved in spasms of voluptuous delight. Onward, still onward, she proceeded, a true madonna of martyrdom, madonna of jealousy, panting, stifling, hoarse sounds of her breathing breaking stridently on the air, until she finally reached the heavy curtains draping the window. Stars were shining outside against the tragic blackness of the night. The branches of the trees swayed heavily to and fro, like waving funereal plumes, dark and mournful, suggesting graves and tombs.

Still another mournful stroke of the bell resounded forth, metallic, vibrating, sending its shock against the window like a gust of sudden wind. Guida recoiled in a paroxysm of fear and jealousy, and staggered, tottering, to the table. Supporting herself against it, she touched with her delicate fingers, which were numb and trembling with mortal coldness, the sharp blade of the familiar dagger. In a resistless impulse, she convulsively clasped her hand fast about its ivory hilt.

She then wandered dizzily to the portrait, nearly falling, in her agitation, over the couch where Eduardo was peacefully sleeping. There, over her head, that "other woman" was smiling in triumph, with parted lips expressing both petulance and mockery. The feel of the dagger within her hand imparted growing force to Guida. She opened and fixed the blade, from which glittered sparkling reflections

which laughed, as it were, with mocking and sarcastic gleams, as the teeth of the "other woman," seemingly, gave forth brilliant fire from within her smiling lips.

Now, floating out from the leafy verdure of the trees sounded once again the hollow reverberation of the bell's funereal tolling. Was it the last peal but one—was it not rather the last of all? Ah, her final moment had come. The bell was marking the last instant of her life. She stood there enveloped in mortal cold. Her breathing was arrested and asphyxia overpowered her. Her throat contracted in a frightful spasm. The fingers of death were embracing and crushing her breast, in a fatal clasp. For a moment she tried vainly to use her reason, to cry out for aid, to escape the grim terror which had seized her. Suddenly, she became aware, in perception piercing her fright and delirious agony, Eduardo, her husband, lying before her in sweet and profound slumber, calm, tranquil, provokingly undisturbed, wholly unaffected by the storm within his wife's being. There he lay, smiling happily, as he dreamed of that "other woman!" The "other woman!" The horrible "other woman!" Guida felt herself within the grasp of a swift, insane, uncontrollable impulse. Rushing heavily onward, she buried the deadly dagger blade in her husband's breast. Then, her life ebbing away as the fierce wave of power and frantic energy subsided to leave her exhausted, panting, powerless, she fell staggering across the lifeless corpse whose features gleamed coldly upward. In a spasm of desperate insanity, she withdrew the dagger from her husband's breast and madly plunged its bright point within her heart.

explained to me that he often complained of severe pains in the stomach after having played too much.

I found fault with her for not having already summoned a doctor and I rushed out into the street like a crazy man.

"It is a disease which only attacks small boys," said the doctor; "an operation is absolutely essential . . . but . . ."

"I beg of you to tell me everything," I cried, overcome by anxiety.

"What I am afraid of is that blood-poisoning has already set in and in that event—it will be too late!"

Leaving my wife almost unconscious from emotion, we lost no time in having him taken from the house. Because of my hand which had been amputated, we were able to have him admitted to a military hospital.

The doctors had advised me to remain by his side until they should put him under ether. I held him on my knee in one of the corners of the room while I watched one of the nurses undress him. His feverish gaze fixed itself heavily upon me as if he was imploring me to save him. I drew him to me and, kissing him on his cheek, I said: "Do not be afraid, my son, I will remain by your side!"

By this time he was only clothed in his little undershirt and he was all a-tremble. When I saw his little body before me, with his deep, black eyes seeking my own glance, it seemed to me that I could already visualize him stretched out at full length on the table.

I took him up in my arms and carried him bodily into the operating-room. There we found several persons all dressed in white and whose faces neither Ivan nor I were familiar with. At this moment he put his little arms around my neck and murmured broken-heartedly: "Papa!" I trembled at this word. It seemed to me that he was reproaching me as if I was carrying him towards death! Then, all of a sudden, I had before my eyes the panorama of the entire, wild countryside of Albania with both of us grasping each other like this as we retreated before the enemy. But at that time I was carrying him back to life; I was saving him from death on the frozen Albanian plain and I was rocking him in my arms in order to keep alive the vital force which was slowly leaving him. At

that time I was offering him my very life's blood in the words of fatherly affection with which I encouraged him and in the evening, beneath my tent, I pictured a wreath of flowers gracing his little brow. But at present. . . .?

"Make haste!" exclaimed a severe voice. With an effort I braced myself. A nurse drew near and took him from my arms, while I turned my head to conceal the tears in my eyes and began making my way to the door.

"Stay where you are," commanded the same severe voice. Mastering my sorrow, I approached the operating-table and took hold of his hand. He was looking at me timidly and I was able to fathom his question by looking at his glance, quite as if I could see what was going on inside of his brain. He was now under the effect of the ether. I was on the point of leaving the room when just at that moment it seemed that he was calling to me.

"It is nothing—nothing," the doctor said encouragingly. It was the result of the sleep induced by the chloroform. One was able to distinguish in the room the faint, trembling words:

"The war . . . the war. . . . Papa. . . . His amputated arm . . ."

It seemed to me that these words came from the shadowy depths of a tomb where Death was standing patiently on guard.

I sensed that these were his last remarks, uttered in memory of all the suffering we had endured together and that a barrier had separated me from him for all the rest of my life and for all eternity as well. I pressed my hand over my head and, stumbling out of the room, I allowed myself to sink down on a chair in the corridor. I could hear steps moving about in the operating-room, and after that all was silent. It seemed to me that my head was bursting beneath a terrific pressure and that a cold, frigid hand was seeking about in my breast, trying to find my heart. I felt that I was going quite mad and I began crying broken-heartedly: "Lord! have pity—have pity!"

V

A long time passed like this. Several times I approached the door, hoping to enter, but I did not have the strength to raise my hand. Vainly I listened with my ear against the door, but a strange rumbling in my head prevented me from hearing anything. This rumbling seemed to split my brain and a terrible presentiment took possession of me. Suddenly the door was thrown open and a nurse, hiding her face in her hands, hurried down the steps. A terrible thought overwhelmed me and like a mad man I rushed into the room and approached the operating-table. At first I was unable to distinguish anything at all, but an incomprehensible force made me lift my one arm and tear my hair. Shortly after this I felt some one shaking me by the shoulder and then I recognized the familiar voice of the doctor seeking to console me:

"Be brave! Nobody would have been able to have saved him. Why did you not bring him here a month sooner?"

These words enabled me to regain possession of myself in spite of the fact that I had not thoroughly understood them. I stooped over a trifle and contemplated Ivan's lifeless features. Very gently I touched him with my hand, as if I had been afraid of waking him up. He was still warm from the glow of life which had scarcely gone from him. I drew still nearer to him and the anguishing thought came to me that possibly the doctor had made some mistake. I attempted to discover on his livid features the smile which I had become so accustomed to. For a long time I contemplated him in this way, asking myself, "Which one of us is dreaming, he or I?" While looking at him my glance would fix itself on his calm features, his fine, large brow and his closed eyes. At the corner of his lips I observed that same expression which was so dear to me and which would come to him when something had surprised him or when he was about to laugh. I began asking myself at just what moments this expression had impressed me the most. Then all of a sudden, incapable of overcoming this one thought which had taken complete possession of me, I was able to recall the occasion. It seemed to me then that he would come to life and would

ask me with that smiling expression in his eyes and on his lips:

"Tell me, Papa, where is it that you place your beard?"

It was evident to me that he was quite dead and that everything was over with. Sobbing with all my soul, I allowed myself to sink down upon his dead body.

THE NIGHT JOURNEY

A LETTISH TALE BY ANNA BRIGADER

THE sun was now low in the west and a light mist mounting from the earth. Where the sun shone, rain-drops still pattered down grayly, but in the shade the droplets falling from the eaves and gables seemed like globules of clear golden and rosy crystal. Forth from the snow sparkling on the fields emerged brown mounds of soil, brightly illuminated by the setting sun. The tree-tops in the distant wood were touched with glowing flame.

Her arms filled with a great bunch of hay, Selma was pausing just within the stable door. With eyes aglow and head bent forward, she stood listening awhile. She had surely heard a faint sound somewhere! She remained motionless for some moments. Her loose hair, straying low over her hot forehead, was faintly stirred by her quick breathing.

All was silent. She must have been mistaken. Shaking her head, Selma started up abruptly, and briskly entered the stable. This remote barn of the Kruhkle family was now empty and cold. Formerly, its very last recess had been occupied by sleek and prosperous cattle. A stall had been partitioned off in a corner for the horse. Behind this thin wall, which was covered with straw and manure, stood Sihle, lowing, her hanging head swinging to and fro as she awaited her caretaker. As Selma threw down the hay before her she stretched out her soft neck and rubbed her head against Selma's sleeve. Selma usually stroked her.

Now, however, Selma pushed her aside. "You must wait, Sihle, for you are no longer first." For yesterday had been a holiday for the Kruhkles. Sihle had given birth to a calf. The calf now claimed attention first of all.

When Selma was feeding and cleaning the cow she usually talked to it. Sometimes she would sing a little

song, all of her own. "Good times are coming, Sihle. Spring is at hand. Spring is here. The snow is melting and will soon go away. The grass will soon come, and so will the yellow flowers. Good times are coming. You will go to the meadow with Austra and Rita. You can all get warm in the sunshine. You will not be hungry any more. We shall see better times, better times." The words poured forth, rhythmically accompanied Selma's thoughts and ceased.

Selma cleaned the cow, milked her and carried the milk into the house. These tasks accomplished she put on her shawl and went out again. The scanty snow crinkled under her feet and the hard and sharp clods of earth impeded her steps. She was very uneasy and kept asking herself, "Why doesn't he come? I've been waiting for him so long! It's a long time. I wonder if anything has happened to him!"

As Selma had covered some distance with her rapid steps, she tried to still her quickly beating heart, stopped abruptly and strained her ear to listen. The sun had set by this time. Deep peace and silence were brooding over the landscape. Selma paused motionless for a time, her hands clasped against her breast, as if she would compel her madly throbbing heart to beat more slowly. She even forced herself to smile.

"Why, I am crazy," she told herself. "Why should I go so far? Everything is well. This isn't the first time! Why can't I ever get used to it? Unexpected things can happen so, everywhere——"

She turned on her heel and moved back toward the house. She tried to persuade herself that she had felt this iniquitude before. How many times had she known this wretched anxiety and unrest because of the man she loved so much! How clearly she remembered those refugee days in the foreign country, when men were obliged to wander far seeking food for their dear ones and for their cattle! How dreadful those days when her husband was absent for weeks at a time, seeking work to gain his bread! He had never been absent from her thoughts for a single moment. Her heart had gone with him on all his wanderings. In

her spirit she spread protecting hands over him, guarding him with all the power of her soul. Firmly as she might believe in the power of the soul and spirit to charm away evil, she knew she was always afraid and trembled all over at every bit of evil news. But only evil was present now in the world. She wanted to safeguard her heart's dearest treasure. She must always be uneasy. During the long hours of her sleepless nights she held protracted speech with her dear husband. She told him all about her sad and lonely hours and bestowed upon him caresses so gentle, shy and tender that they could not bear the light of day. Hardly could she make out her husband's dear form in the distance, hardly could she hear the returning tones of his beloved voice, without feeling as if her beating heart had received a welcome balm. Then all her overwrought nerves were quieted and peace and contentment flooded her soul. It was always just like this. Within her she felt resounding joy, but outwardly she was cool and quiet. Past moments of suffering, endurance—of care, doubt and anxiety, now seemed but the impression of a dream. She would have been ashamed to speak of all this. She would sooner have bitten her tongue out than to utter a single wrathful word of complaint, even though such a word could be due only to her loneliness.

At the house door, Selma took off her shawl and rubbed her brow and cheeks with it. Her face was no longer the same. She had rubbed away all her trouble and unrest. She could now present herself to the people of the place.

The Kruhkle family had returned home in company with a throng of repatriated refugees. The dwellers of the town had found it completely ruined. During the early years of the war, one of the German settlers had made the Kruhkle place his home. He had gone away, God only knew where, and with him had disappeared everything remaining about the place. Neither windows nor doors remained in the buildings.

In the summer time two rooms had been hastily prepared at Kruhkle as a shelter against the wind. Selma's family, including three children and Selma's old mother, had lived

less ocean—a sort of sugar sea with frozen white caps. A brazen sun seemed to scowl icily over our heads. It appeared to illuminate only its own self and to wrap itself in its own rays in order to protect itself from the cold. Then all of a sudden a squall broke over us; the snowflakes swirled around us and the violins played merrily on. It was all like some unnatural, frozen springtime with benumbed nightingales and melting butterflies.

Fanciful dreams flourished within me while my flesh was slowly being frozen. There was a dull sensation of voluptuousness to my suffering. The fiddlers were benumbed by the cold and before very long I was oppressed by the silence about me. No sound came to my ears save the trill of the little aërial bells which caressed my mortal and marvelous fanciful visions.

Would I succeed in escaping from the perfect bevy of kisses which strove to seal forever my trembling eyelids?

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My lady companions then attempted to translate the charms of nature with appropriately beautiful words. As a result all the enchantment evaporated. All my attention was now centered on the otter-skin coat of Madame Foulgere, the tip of Mr. Vineano's weeping nose, Madame Trandafiresco's fur-lined pelisse and my father's gray moustaches, jutting forth from under his lowered hood.

My wonderful dream had been shattered. I had imagined myself to be Zina Consinzina, Queen of all the Fairies; now I had become, once more, mere Miss Mikesceano, the deputy's daughter, crowned no longer with a vaporous halo but only with an unbecoming *glouga*, and who, far from soaring about in a pure-white atmosphere on her gauze wings, now found her feet glued to her cloth boots by the severe cold. I fell from the fleecy clouds—indolently, like the slow-falling flakes of snow.

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Finally we approached Stalpeni. The houses bunched themselves in small groups; their thatch-top roofs assumed that stooped appearance of old housewives and they seemed

to be confiding to one another all the secrets of their inhabitants. The first and most dilapidated looking shack, a trifle to one side from the rest, was the lair of Ilinnka, the local sorceress. The most distant and the most substantial looking house was where the fiancée resided. From beneath the shed the parents of the future bride and groom came forward to meet us while the *lautari*, who were the first to have alighted, greeted us with their melodies.

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"Good day to you, Lelea Frossa!" called out my father in way of greeting. "Where is Mioara that I may present her to her godmother?"

"She will be here right away, Conachoula. But what a very distinguished young lady you have there! She is as beautiful as they are in fairy tales."

Lelea Frossa poured forth her praise in such a lamentable tone of voice that one would have thought that she wished to have me buried.

But after this the fiancée made her appearance.

"I kiss your hands, my good Godmother," she exclaimed.

She was a well developed and finely-set-up young girl. Her rounded bosom swelled the black velvet of her bolero jacket, which was bespangled with gold thread and broadly spaced over a *borangik* shirt waist, embroidered from top to bottom with many different-colored threads. The fringe of her shirt waist fell below the pleated folds of her pinafore of black cloth which, one of them falling in front and the other behind, formed a sort of skirt, which parted just below the waist line. She was wearing good, serviceable, high-laced shoes, which reached as high as the calves of her legs.

Just as she was I found a sort of charm to this peasant girl. It was the natural charm of a naïve and taciturn young maid, who appeared original because of her rustic, humble origin. Were her dark-skinned features enigmatic or cunningly deceitful? She did her utmost to dissimulate her true sentiments but she betrayed her very attempt at dissimulation. I noticed that her eyes, which at first had

been filled with frank admiration, had suddenly become manifestly spiteful.

But almost immediately she lowered over her cheeks the wisps of her *beteala*—a sort of nuptial gauze veil of fine silver thread which glistened on her black hair—and, as if in some vaporous cascade, she hid her face from view in its soft folds.

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Lelea Frossa presented us with an earthen pan and a truly marvelous hand towel, all embroidered with gold thread, saying:

"Here is some water, Godmother, with which to revive your benumbed hands and here is something to dry them with."

"But it is really not worth while to take the trouble to get out such a fine washing outfit as this," protested my father.

"But the custom demands it, Godfather. This linen cloth, which we have woven and ornamented ourselves, will feel very soft in your grasp and, afterwards, you will make a small contribution, which is also according to the custom."

Taken off his guard my father laughingly obeyed her instructions.

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Triumphantly the procession made its entry into the church. The frescoes of saints, with which all the walls were colorfully embellished, greeted us with open arms. The icons held forth their hallowed hands, which had been tarnished by generations of kisses. So many faithful disciples had prostrated themselves in front of these images that their knees had worn grooves in the flagstones.

Dane and Mioara approached the *iconastasis* and they remained standing there in all their fine array; for Dane also was embroidered, adorned with gold braid and bespangled from head to foot with gold thread. In order to prove that love alone and not any selfish motive had

led them to the altar the carpet upon which they were standing had been strewn with coins.

The two swinging doors of the *iconostasis* were then thrown open. The pope—a noble, bearded old man—sprinkled us with holy water by means of a branch of sweet basil and began chanting nuptial prayers in that peculiar nasal tone of voice exacted by the rites. From the choir the deacons responded to his prayers.

He had the special young bride's crown placed on Mioara's brow. It had been tarnished through long use but I must admit that the peasant girl had the hieratic appearance of some Byzantine Empress beneath this simple wreath. Dane, who had been similarly crowned, appeared, to the contrary, more weighted down than ever. He held himself very stiff and scarcely dared to move for fear that he would dump his diadem of artificial flowers onto the floor.

Then, while still continuing his nasal liturgy, the pope, after the benediction, proceeded with the triple exchange of rings. With every second or third glance the newly married couple lifted their eyes toward each other, something which was quite contrary to all precepts.

"Bride, lower your eyes modestly when everybody is looking at you," came the severe command.

But, in reality, Mioara was far from being the center of general interest. It was quite evident that the vast majority of glances converged, along with the rising incense, directly in my direction. The men's glances resembled those of cowering dogs; the women's were like those of jealous cats.

And yet my attire was quite free from all ornamentation. What, then, inspired the men to contemplate my dress with such beatitude, and what induced the women to examine my simple, flowing dress of dark material with such disapprobation? Was it because this dress of mine was embellished by the gentle lines of my own body? Yes, no doubt. My radiant beauty was due entirely to my heavenly blue eyes and my sun-kissed strands of yellow hair. However, merely for the sake of modesty, I was certainly not going to shave my head and gouge my eyes out.

Quite to the contrary my smile revealed my fair dimples still more provokingly than before. I curled my silky gold curls around my ears as if they had been priceless ringlets, and my physical beauty shone through the meshes of my brown cloth dress. Yes, I purposely exposed my natural graces.

My father and I were seated alongside of our god-children and we were both given an enormous beribboned candle, bedecked with flowers like some greasy may-pole. The one I held was as tall as I was and certainly it was far heavier.

The newly-weds were holding each other by the hand. As a sign of their union the pope made them drink from the same goblet, turn in turn, on three separate occasions. Dane, although he had had plenty of experience in emptying filled tumblers of wine, swallowed the nuptial beverage the wrong way. He began coughing and his crown toppled over to one side but he managed to catch hold of it in time with a quick gesture which, however, caused the goblet to tremble in the pope's grasp and a few drops of the liquid spattered to the floor.

The guests commented upon this unexpected interlude in low tones.

But by this time the ceremony was nearly over with. The officiating priest began intoning the anthem, "*Isaie danse*," and he compelled the newly-weds and their god-father and godmother to begin dancing a lively, measured dance all around the altar while, in the meantime, the parents scattered grains of wheat beneath the feet of the dancers and candy drops among the lookers on.

And thus it was that there was one more married couple in the world.

Upon leaving the church Mioara was surrounded by a group of young people almost beneath the portal of the church. They accompanied her noisily to her own home. There they forced her to sit down and then proceeded to lift from her head the silver meshes of her *beteala*. Then they obliged her to don the silk *toulpan* which consecrated her a truly married woman. From then on she was no longer to have the right to go out bareheaded. They

formed in a circle around her and began singing the refrains of *desgovit*:

"Keep quiet, little bride, and don't cry any more,
For you will see your father and your mother again,
When strawberries grow on the apple tree boughs
And the pear trees blossom with violets."

It is customary for the bride to pretend to cry when listening to this song, but I feel certain that Mioara really did weep.

While walking along the snow-covered village street I saw the two newly-weds draw near to each other a little distance apart from the rest. They appeared to be tolerably affected. Dane, with his huge black hands of a laborer, was fingering the fringe of his broad silk waistband—this is the national *briou*. The only thing attractive about him was the black and white of his eyes, which were as brilliant as jet and as pure as porcelain. Mioara, with her inexpressive features, beneath which glowed an intimate flame, was waiting for him to make the advances and quite willing to accede to his wishes. Thus the groom swaggered along.

What clumsy, awkward simpletons they are! And how are they going to manage to steal a few kisses? She appears to be as flexible as a chump of wood and he is as enterprising as the stump of some tree. Their tanned faces seem to stain their light-colored garments; they look like two carrion crows on the snow.

And I am so purely radiant in my somber robe!

III

Like some lovely jewel re-entering its proper setting I closeted myself in the sumptuous guest chamber while waiting for the wedding feast to begin.

I relaxed on the rich carpet of various hues which covered the padding of the circular divan. I stretched myself luxuriously alongside of the monumental brick stove, whose

warmth even attained the windows where it effaced the beautiful frosty ferns—which are winter's coat-of-arms—traced on the panes of glass by the cold outside. For a time I examined the bunches of garlic which were hanging from the ceiling, the wreaths of red pimienta and the perfect stalactites of sausages. Then my shifting gaze fixed itself upon the luminous fireplace. I listened to what the crackling flames were saying and I responded to them.

"They appear awkward but they are quite sincere," said the flame. "Dane is united to Mioara by an ardent tenderness."

"Piteous idol. Shabby worshiper."

"Dane is robust and good. Mioara is gentle and kindly."

"But so mournful, so unresponsive, and quite devoid of spiritual feeling."

"Happy are they who are loved even in their mediocrity."

"Never shall I be loved in this manner."

"Never will you love any one in this manner."

"I will be loved because of the curly Indian corn wisps brushing my neck and the shadows under the fine flaxen strands of my lengthy lashes."

"You will not be admired because of your caustic and domineering character. Only the heart is capable of loving and as yet you have no heart. . . ."

This impertinence caused me to send a kick into the flame and it subsided. A gust of cold air swept down the chimney, swirling the smoke back into the chamber, and as I retreated before the dense cloud I could hear the drawn-out, melancholy, rhythmical chant coming from the courtyard:

"As soon as I beheld her, and almost at once,

She captivated me, so tender was her love.

And although she too is nothing but a maid

Still she is different from the rest, although I know not why."

(M. Eminesco.)

"Come along, Godmother, the feast is all set for you."

It was Mioara, who had discovered my hiding place, and she preceded me into the main reception room. Our

"Don't worry! Have no fear! Everything will come out well. I must go with Papa. Just a little way—I shall soon come back. Both of us will soon come back." She took a little packet from the trunk and pressed it into her mother's hand, whispering, "Here's a little money, the children's baptismal certificates, our wedding rings——"

"My God, child, what does all this mean?" trembled her mother's voice.

"Be quiet! Don't wake the children! Be still. All will be well—all well——"

"If you want to come, come along," called the stranger from the other room, and Selma hastened out.

Kruhkle and his wife went out first and were followed by the two strangers. A wagon was behind the stable. As they were mounting it, a third man suddenly stood up. He had been lying down in the wagon and pointed his gun at Kruhkle and his wife as if he were aiming at them. Seeing there was no fear, he lay down again in the wagon. The latter was wide and comfortable. It was like the kind that householders had formerly used for their picnics and hunting.

The leader of the crowd indicated a place in the wagon for the arrested man and his wife. He ordered the man who had been asleep in the wagon to place himself in the rear and mounted to the driver's seat, beside the third man, who held the reins, placing himself so that he could watch his prisoner and the road at the same time. The wagon then started.

As Kruhkle made a remark to his wife, the leader rudely ordered, "Silence! Arrested people must not talk!" And two gunbarrels were thrust like a wall between the two prisoners. The guards kept the guns in this position for a time, but after a while one man withdrew his gun and the other followed his fellow's example. The man on the seat turned from the captives to the driver, and lit a cigar. A few low words were exchanged between the two. Selma felt the form of the guard behind sinking deeper and deeper onto the floor of the wagon. The guard was soon snoring soundly.

As the wagon whirled onward, the horses racing madly,

the driver pulled on the reins and urged on the nags still more. "Come, come, now. More speed! Get along, there! Go on, there! Lively, now, lively!"

Kruhkle bent over toward his wife. "That fellow's driving like mad," he murmured in a low tone. "He seems to have done nothing all his life but drive horses to death."

"Yes," returned Selma, whispering, and looking into her husband's eyes she saw that he was smiling.

He again bent toward her, whispering, "There's nothing to fear!"

"I know it," she answered, confidently. But her husband's smile only made her uneasy and she doubtfully shook her head. "What do we know about it?" she asked. But she whispered to her husband to keep silent, and clasped his hands fast in her own.

During the day, Kruhkle, seeking seed corn, had wandered a good way off, and had heard one thing and another. He had formed the opinion that this terrible power, which for the moment menaced everybody, stood upon feet of clay and must collapse, not only because nobody believed in it any more, but also because nobody any longer feared it. A power which is scorned ceases to exist.

He had started home in good spirits, for his quest had been successful. He had found more corn than he had expected to, and the find had lifted a heavy burden from his shoulders. If he could sow all he had obtained, he could be assured of food enough for the next winter, and he would be thus somewhat relieved of immediately pressing necessities. Life seemed about to bloom again.

The stresses and strains of recent years had accustomed Kruhkle to reflect on many things and test his opinions. Whenever, living far from centers of education and culture, in remote Livonian towns or in obscure villages of Russia, he could get hold of an old newspaper, the view which the latter reflected of the world seemed as strange as that shining forth from a cloudy and obscure mirror. The view he thus obtained, however, was confirmed by the experiences he had had. He had thus learned to observe and weigh men. His schooling, though, was long and severe.

On leaving home, the measure which he applied to

things and people was a very limited one. A native instinct made him approach men only as necessity demanded in giving them support. He did not wish to lose his ability to aid others. He had always been a giver rather than a taker, and he did not know how to ask for aid. His requests were either unheard, or were presented with so much haughtiness that they were rejected with equal pride. It was the same with many of his companions. He had beheld, on the one hand, difficulties so great that those who endured them broke beneath their terrible burdens. And, on the other hand, he had observed an incomprehensible hardness of heart and indifference manifested by many, many men. His enforced flight from home had been a great catastrophe. Life had been giving way before him as the Red Sea had retreated before the rod of Moses. Now it poured back into its old bed with added weight and power. Everything once gained was now sucked deeply downward, buried and whirled into oblivion. Some people suffered and the others were spectators of the pain. But to witness suffering and to suffer oneself are two very different things.

The first urge to renewed activity was the very difficult situation in which Kruhkle found himself. Whether it was his fault or not made no difference. And, in helping himself and scorning fate, Kruhkle found such strength within him as he had never even hoped to possess. From a suffering man he became an observer. He was thus helped, not only to forget trouble, but to experience a certain species of enjoyment. All this, however, was but half a recovery. The study of men demanded keenness and judgment. It supplied lifelong schooling.

During the practice of his calling, Kruhkle had learned to observe nature, animals and the soil. He thought that he understood them well, yet he was always being surprised by something new, something unforeseen, something unexpected. How strangely intelligent did the beasts of the field appear, when once relieved of burdens and left free to exercise their native cunning, that effective weapon of the oppressed!

With men, was not that principle even stronger?

Approach a man with the question, "What can I take from you? How can I get something out of you?" and the man will close himself against you as the blossom of the hop plant closes itself against the evening twilight. But such questions are by no means necessary. One may ask, "What kind of a man are you? What have you felt, suffered, experienced? In the struggle for existence have you lost hope and the joy derived from labor, or are these feelings tenfold stronger in you? Have you buried your inheritance in a narrow and egoistic life, or have you employed all your keenness to increase and enlarge it? How much have you known, how much have you learned to read of the deeply lying lessons contained in the book of life?" For the key to existence is obtained not from preoccupation about oneself, but from love manifested toward one's fellows. A glance into the soul of a man is like a cleft made in a rock or cliff, revealing hidden strata in all their original freshness.

People considered Kruhkle intelligent. This quiet man of Courland was thought to have the power of touching the hardest of hearts. But to ordinary people intelligence meant only craft and the subserving of one's own interest.

"How am I really intelligent?" asked Kruhkle of himself. He knew that he perceived the relations of things only obscurely, and as if groping in mist. The more he felt these relations, the less did he perceive himself. The aid which he received unexpectedly he regarded as a loan, which he must return with interest. When he had discharged his obligations, he felt as if he had received rather than as if he had suffered deprivation. His heart was more at rest.

He had returned home full of gratitude, and fully aware of obligations placed upon him. There he found ruined homes, wreckage and destruction. The fields were mined with trenches, their soil upturned with shot and shell. The fruitful soil was deeply buried under refuse, as were the hearts of men. Everything fruitful and healthy was spoiled, and envy and hate were battenning as in a festering wound. Those who have no sunshine in their hearts only make life dark for others. Why must this be so? Why must men, when sunken in error, scatter poison on

every hand? Or, in reality, do these things become fact only in the heat of frightful combats, struggles for clear vision?

Kruhkle was no stranger to such combats. His thoughts had wandered far. He had hated and damned, scorned and cursed. Finally, he felt that he had come closer to the truth of things. He felt in his soul strength enough to heal all wounds and sorrows. Yet the way to such knowledge is rough and steep. The formation of power and spirit progresses slowly, very slowly.

So they whirled on through the night. Why? Whither? Near by were men who turned away from him, in order to hide their faces. Who were they? What were their thoughts? Where did their hate come from, that hate that had turned their hearts to stone? Had the witch's curse of old fairy tales worked a spell upon those hearts? How could the latter be restored to life? How could these men be made to see their error? By talking to them? By discussion? By telling them that they were losing their own capacity? Kruhkle ceased his reflections.

The numberless stars were burning in the heavens. The Milky Way was stretching in a pale pathway across the celestial vault. On the left lay a wood. The white trunks of the birches shimmered through the gloom like floating fabrics. On the right there stretched away a field, where mounds of snow pierced by the dark earth glittered mysteriously. Everything was marvelously alive. Chaos was reclaiming its own. Memories and fancies were only the material for new creations.

A sudden feeling of warmth flowed through Kruhkle's soul. He bent over to his wife and whispered, "Selma?" The word was put more like a question than an exclamation. It suggested memories of things now far away, of experiences lived through long ago. He raised his finger and silently pointed to the wood and field, as if he would ask, "Do you remember?"

She nodded. She knew. She remembered that far-distant evening, the first one of their united life. Kruhkle, who had gone to the next town on business, had met Selma's father there. He had asked if he might not accompany

his daughter home. It was holiday time, and he must remain in the town for another day. She had sat close beside him, shy and reserved. That fateful ride of theirs was linked fast to their lives. The stars had shone and the birches had shimmered exactly as they did tonight.

Was it this journey by night and its strange nature, or was it the mysterious influence of Nature, which roused these tender thoughts? How could his wife have the same knowledge, feelings and memories as he? What a harmony of thoughts and feelings! It was as if his own heart were beating beside him.

"Selma!" he whispered again, pressing her closer to him. He looked at her. He could not satiate himself with that quiet smile of hers, which seemed so wonderful. Her countenance was at once near and distant, well known and yet unknown. She seemed beautiful and young, as the magic shades of night enveloped her. Her life shone forth marvelously through the gloom. In the midst of his sweet impression the troubling question flashed across him, like a sharp and sudden sound, "Is it really as I think it is? Do I really understand her? How can I understand her?"

"You came with me!" he murmured to himself, full of wonder, as he clasped Selma's hand in his. He held it for a long time, feeling in it his wife's beating heart. For a long time he felt that painful feeling of joy. He realized how his scattered thoughts and feelings were flowing back, as an overflowing river finally returns to its bed.

"She is my wife," thought Kruhkle, thinking strange, new thoughts. He knew she was a good mother, a good wife, a good housekeeper. He knew that. The hand resting quietly in his had trembled when he touched it for the first time. She was quiet, devoted, obedient and docile. He knew that, too. Now, though, he felt a new power in her. She drew him irresistibly to her. He would willingly have placed his whole fate in that hand, have entrusted his whole being to her, have gone to sleep and wept in her bosom. He felt both strength and weakness, boldness and surrender.

Old words floated before his mind: "Graciousness and peace." These words now seemed new, and as if heard for

I seemed to be as heavy to carry as some transgression, so heavy, indeed, that my carrier was obliged to hold me more firmly than before.

Then—did I give it or did I receive it?—I felt in the obscurity the secret confession of a kiss upon my lips. I also remember that an imploring woman surprised this secret. . . .

"Leave her alone, Dane! . . ." But the man had only pushed the woman away from him.

When I regained consciousness I was lying on the divan near the large stove, and my father was there by my side rubbing my hands.

"Are you feeling better now?" he inquired.

"Yes, Father."

Then he took leave of me in order to preside over some function or other.

Scattered on the floor beside me I saw my broken ring, my faded rosebud and my crumpled ribbon. I picked everything up and donned them again. I buttoned up my dress, which I had torn open with my own hands, and I let my finger nails grate along my silk scarf. Ah! what a delight! I found that one of the silk fringes was missing.

But the chamber was as hot as a sweating room. The women guests had made themselves as comfortable as they could. Here and there sprawled a corset bearing a Parisian label or a jacket of Viennese cut. The atmosphere was laden with the odor of perspiring bodies and my benevolent nurses were commenting upon my fit of fainting. It was too much like some old maid's sewing circle and I lost no time in making my escape.

The dancing, shouting, and the squeaking of the violins were still going on in the barn. I passed along quite indifferent to it all and skirted the side of the shed. I could overhear a whispered conversation going on. I held my breath and listened intently. I did my best to understand what was being said.

"I beg you to give that to me," said a woman's plaintive voice.

"Give you what?" replied the man evasively.

"That cursed bit of silk fringe."

"If you insist upon it."

That was all. Then came the sound of hurrying feet and Mioara came running out of the shed. She passed alongside of me without noticing my presence. Her eyes, like those of some suffering virgin's, transfigured her dark features. How, indeed, could one refrain from loving this brooding and anguished peasant girl who was the very incarnation of the most tender and natural expression of love?

She did not catch sight of me but I could see her running off over the snow. She was running straight ahead of her, like some sleep walker.

And then I was filled with the desire to know where she was bound for. With my dainty slipper I picked out the tracks she left behind her in the snow.

IV

Where could Mioara be running to like this through the snow, already so very far ahead of me? The poetic beauty of the wintry scene did not detain her in the least. She was rushing on, like some hallucinated person, towards happiness or sorrow.

"Mioara! Mioara!" I called out to her as I ran. What, indeed, if I should sink down unobserved in this damp mantle of snow! "Mioara! Mioara! Wait for me! Where are you bound for?" Mioara trembled, stopped and looked around.

"My godmother, I am going to see Ilinnka the sorceress. Now that I am married I should like to know what my future holds in store for me."

"Oh! But I will accompany you then! I, too, have dealings with sorcerers!"

Mioara at first seemed to be suspicious but then she changed her mind and appeared to be sincerely flattered.

"I am going along with you, Mioara!" I repeated.

"May it bring you good fortune, lovely Godmother."

ground. A salvo of shots rang out near by. He leaped into a thicket and hid himself. He could see two forms standing close together. More shots were heard. One of the forms fell down. The other, the form of a woman, remained erect. More shots resounded. Still she stood there. It was frightful. The man could not look on. He stooped down and covered his face with his hands. He seemed to remain there for days, years, an eternity. More shots still. Then all was quiet.

The man now ventured to remove his hands from his face. He saw three men digging in the hard earth. The hard earth rang as the shovels struck against it. The man did not dare to stir. All was finally over. The three men threw their shovels and guns into the wagon, and drove away. They passed close to the watcher. They were covered with sweat, and wiped it from their brows. One of them spat. They drove away as fast as the horses could run.

The man came to life, and took to flight. He plunged over tree stumps, through heaps of snow through which his footsteps crashed, over earthy mounds covered with thin ice, and ran, ran, ran, until his violently throbbing heart compelled him to a halt. He stood still a moment, as if listening. And then, very slowly, and concealing himself in the thickets of the wood, he crept back to the spot where the terrible event had occurred.

He crept onward, on tiptoe, like a thief.

He saw every impression made in the ground and noticed every broken twig.

The grave lay between two pine trees. At one corner of the grave he remarked the gay fringe of a shawl. Green, red and yellow, it was shining against the freshly turned earth. He scraped the yielding sand to form a little furrow, gently placed the fringe within, and smoothed the earth over it again. The sand covering the freshly dug grave seemed still warm. He drew from his pocket a knife and carved a cross in the bark of the young pine tree that stood at one end of the grave. When this was completed, he carved another in the pine tree standing at the other end of the grave. Tears were rolling down his cheeks.

AT THE WITCH'S TAVERN

By PAVILS ROSITIS

DREAMS possess the enchanting power of taking men into places which, but for this kindly guidance, they can never attain. So conducted I paid, and only a short time ago, a visit to hell, to the real and actual hell, and such a hell as has convinced me through and through that I could never find the way there if dreams had not pointed out my road. I had never before had a glimpse of the real hell that exists, and I am quite sure that I shall not see such a hell even after I die. However, hell in relation to my future may as well be ignored. It will be quite sufficient to occupy myself with my memories and the way in which they were formed.

On an evening in June, that month when the nights are shorter than a rabbit's hind leg and the days longer than eternity, my limbs were fairly sinking under me after a tramp which had continued for many a mile. My nose was suffering especially, for the dust and dirt of the road had made my glasses unbearably heavy. This burden had quite diverted my attention from the lovely perfume of the flowers all about me. I remained perfectly cold to everything and refused to be affected by the sweet pervasive influences of the gathering dusk. My long, loose hair was heavy on my head and sometimes got into my eyes. This did not trouble me. My hair was my pride and joy, and quite distinguished me from ordinary wanderers straying upon the highways. I was a pilgrim, and must bear upon my shoulders both the finest beauty conferred by Nature, and the grimmest dust bestowed by my travels afoot.

The paling glow of evening overtook me amid fruitful fields, which still lay about me as they had lain all day long, beside the road down which I had come. My face and hands were burning hot, for in these June evenings

the sun beat down mercilessly. Through my eyeglasses I gazed over the green fields to the gray roofs of huts and dwellings, which shrank almost down to the ground. I had decided long ago to content myself, upon my pilgrimage, with the very same sort of roof which God provides for the stag in the forest and for the lark of the fields, but joy came over me, trembling through every nerve, as I thought of the cozy night's shelter which was now awaiting me. My knapsack was very light now, and all the fatigue of my spirit yielded to the relief sweeping through my frame. My feet grew light as I hastened on towards those welcome roofs, and I could feel my tongue stirring within my mouth in anticipation of the good meal before me. Beneath my tread, the wayside pebbles flew humming into the distance like affrighted bees as I struck them carelessly with my foot. Hurrying on my way to seek the night's hospitality, I was like a wild beast moving hungrily forward on the trail of prey. The loveliness of the scene about me and the magic of the night utterly faded from my consciousness.

Yet, when I reached the door of the only inn within sight, my limbs almost sank beneath me with despair, for through the dust upon my glasses I made out the words on the sign of the inn: "The Witch's Tavern." To resort to such a place! How was it possible! Could I venture to pass my hoped-for reposeful night in such an obviously doubtful retreat as this?

Weariness, however, made me indifferent and the pangs of hunger had to be stilled. My reluctance departed, and I slowly opened the creaking door. There, in a large room before me, sat a man reading from a book placed upon a large table. The book was massive and thick. His dark hair was falling down over his forehead, and all I could make out at first was his tousled head, suggesting the vague blackness of a well-charred tar barrel. He had not been aware of my entrance, and continued his reading without paying the slightest attention to me. So I walked well into the room and called, deliberately, and in a good, loud voice, "Good evening, mine host of the Witch's Tavern!"

He slowly lifted his left eye and regarded me. In the place where his right eye ought to be there was only a huge cavern, which stared blankly at me like the smoky muzzle of a musket. The serviceable eye was separated from the eyeless cave by a thin, bent nose which projected from the countenance like a cavalryman's saber. The high cheekbones protruded from beneath the thickly falling hair as if each were the jawbone of an ass. The one-eyed, Cyclopean glance made me fairly shiver, and the thought flew through my mind that the devil himself was before me, concealed within this old man's skin. I had no longer any desire to remain within this fearsome inn, and was about to beat a hasty retreat when the dry lips of the inn-keeper began slowly to move and words spattered forth as shot falls upon a well-waxed floor.

"Good evening, pilgrim on the road to hell!"

"May I not pass the night in your house?"

"Passing the night is all very well, but if you want a house you must go elsewhere. This place is an inn." His crackling words seemed to scatter against the walls and fairly struck against my glasses.

"Well, all I want is a place to sleep."

"A soft one or a hard one?"

"Anything that will let me stretch my legs."

"The devil only knows what's the matter with your legs! Have you been long on the road?"

"This is the seventh day."

"I suppose you want to eat something?"

"Well, a good meal wouldn't do me any harm!"

"I thought as much." The old man slowly rose to his feet and I saw that he was as long and dry as the charred trunk of a pine tree. His wooden shoes clattered heavily upon the floor, making as much noise as the hoofs of a horse. He opened a door and called, "Bring in something to eat!"

We sat down facing each other across the long table, awaiting the food. I was astonished at the tavern keeper, for it seemed to me that he could look in every direction with that single eye of his, so far did it protrude from the orbit. I could now get a near view of the host's nose,

which proved to be so thin that one could readily see through it. The innkeeper's single eye was quite capable, in fact, of doing all that two good eyes could do. It seemed odd indeed that the old fellow had pursued his reading of the Bible into the twilight without paying the least attention to the gathering gloom. Merely to make conversation I ventured the remark, "Is daytime not long enough for reading, then, and do you really like to read in so dim a light?"

"Oh, every one has his own devil to goad him! Do you yourself wander about without anything to urge you on? You want to see so much yourself that you use glasses to help you!"

At this moment the door through which the innkeeper had given his order was opened, and a young woman appeared, bearing some roast pork upon a plate. The fragrance of the food tickled my nose so much that my mouth fairly began to water. I stole a covert glance at the young woman, answering her shy greeting with a mere, silent nod of my head. She placed the plate of meat upon the table and vanished immediately through the open doorway. She seemed to me like an enchanted princess become the slave of some strange spirit incarnated in flesh and blood. A strange unrest overcame me and all my appetite quite ceased to exist. The innkeeper, though, interrupted my reflections.

"We can both eat now, but you must do the paying. I can't very well pay myself." And he laughed, and sunk his teeth in a huge morsel of bread.

"That's always the very luck you innkeepers have. You get your food and drink free of charge," I rejoined, taking a mouthful of bread in my turn.

"How free of charge? Don't I have to work? And isn't this meat and bread something which has become mine because I have earned it?"

"Well, you just said I must do the paying," I replied, not in the slightest ill temper, but simply because the one-eyed old man was beginning to please and interest me.

"Can you eat your money?" he demanded, aggressively, and I freely admit that I felt as if he had taken the wind out of my sails. I also experienced a vague alarm. The old

Cyclops might well have fifty years to his account, but his sinewy hands were still quite able to choke and overpower drunkards and vagabonds.

"A little root brandy might do us good," added the old man, who immediately rose and placed two copper mugs on the table.

"I don't drink, myself," I explained.

"Well, now, what have you got against yourself? I shan't let you go without at least one good drink!" And he poured out a heavy, dark liquid from a black bottle, and filled both mugs. Then he exclaimed, "Smell how good it is! It contains Nature herself. You might travel all round the world, but you'll never swallow so many fine things as you get in just one gulp of this liquor! Drink it down, and don't be an old maid!"

I raised the mug to my lips and drank deep of the liquor, which had the color and taste of burning tar. I felt as if the bitterness of every bitter herb under the sun were filling my nose, and the tears came into my eyes. I only hoped that the old man wouldn't poison me, and cried, "What kind of a horrible witches' mess do you call that?"

"It's pure alcohol."

"Yes, but what's in it?"

"Oh, pepper, all sorts of leaves, thorn apple, deadly nightshade, wormwood, spiderwebs, serpent-skin, ants——" he rattled off the ingredients without a pause. As each new one was named I fairly shivered and couldn't help feeling that my last hour was nigh. When the old man got to the spiderwebs and serpent-skin I had become nearly powerless and couldn't understand anything else he said. My head was whirling and swimming like a millrace. I came to myself before long, though, and noticed that my host was opening the door again. He called out through it, "Right to bed with him! He'll sleep all night!" He spoke with a growl as he sat down again opposite. I was quite ready to cry out that I wanted no bed there, that I would go away, but the words refused to come. The doorway was again occupied by the young woman's figure.

Her soft voice asked the old host, "What room is he to have?"

"Put him in the ghosts' hole!" said the one-eyed old fellow. At this remark I recoiled as if a snake had bitten me. Perhaps the scoundrel thought I had money with me and had the intention of taking it all for himself, after causing me to have no need of money in the morning. Although my lot in life was by no means so excellent that my existence was worth preserving, I decided that I might as well be on my guard. When I reached my queer room, I took the light and carefully examined the flooring and the walls. Finding nothing wrong there, I next looked to the door. The door could readily be secured from the inside, by means of a heavy bolt. I was well secured against all surprises, for if any one tried to enter by the window I should surely hear the noise. I depended upon my handiness and strength, which were not to be despised. Walls, floor and bolt served well to oppose the old witches' inn-keeper, and I felt no further sense of anxiety on his account. I was ready to forget everything, quite overcome by fatigue and the dark liquor which I had swallowed. It is true, however, that, except for these things, I should have lain awake, trembling for my skin all night. As a matter of fact, I was not at all sure about the harmlessness of the one-eyed old tavern keeper.

As I lay there in my bed, I reflected that the spicy roast pork and the heavy liquor were the very best means of putting me out of commission, and that the old man had need neither of strength nor of craft if he wanted to get the best of me. That comforting idea was the last thing I remembered, for I soon sank into a sleep as deep as that of the grave.

Straightway the bed began to shake like a coffin on a hearse, and a hole opened just above it in the ceiling. The one-eyed host glided into the room through the hole. His single eye was now in the middle of his forehead and glowed in the dark like a coal of fire. He lightly leaped to the floor close by my bed, snorting and stamping like a frightened horse. The young woman who had brought in the roast and shown me to my room last night now also came slipping through the hole above. Her garments were shining like those of a true witch and we were all suddenly

transported to a wide and sunny plain, upon which wild plants were waving to and fro like blue and violet whips.

The witch fetched the one-eyed tavern keeper three good blows with a stick she carried, and changed him into a coach drawn by two fiery black horses, whose nostrils were widely distended with their wild snorts. The witch seized my hand and we both mounted inside the coach. She struck the coachman's seat with her staff, immediately creating a coachman, and the latter turned round and asked, "Where to, my lady?"

"Straight to hell, and don't spare the whip!" And the coachman laid the whip on the horses lustily. We dashed over the burning plain like a cyclone. Not a sound could be heard as we flew onward. Black cats darted to and fro around us like shuttles through wool, and turned somersaults in the air. From the gray stretches of the plain they rose as the soft satin hoods of priests rise above the heads of people gathered in a throng. Under these dark, satiny clouds surely lay the breeding places of all the good and evil in men's souls. The onward flight was so swift that I was breathless, but the witch's face bore an expression of the profoundest satisfaction. I was sorry for the poor horses, and said to the witch, "Can't the driver have a little mercy with his whip? Why, the horses are your husband!"

"Quicker! Quicker! I want to take my youthful fling out of him. This is the only way I can warm him up. He's cold as a snake unless he's whipped."

"Well, you'll only make him grow older!"

"There are plenty of young ones where we are going, plenty of hot young blood, out yonder!"

The horses' backs were flecked with foam as we drew up before a brightly lighted mansion. A throng of servants at once surrounded us, their readiness seeming to show that they had been engaged in their occupation for an eternity. The horses were led away to the stables, which were in a courtyard full of equipages just like ours. Over a flight of stairs, hung with the softest of satin, the witch, gliding onward like a serpent, led me on into the mansion, the heads of the cringing servants bowing low be-

fore us at every step we made. All about us rang out the voices of joyous guests and the house we were entering was like one where every one was gay as at a wedding. We seemed to have arrived at the moment when the long, tiresome ceremony was finished and the first real gayety of the night was beginning.

I sought to reason with myself and to convince myself that the many-voiced cries I heard were not sounds of joy, but wails of woe, for was I not in hell, a place where every voice utters sorrow? Huge paneled doors swung open before us and we swept on into a magic temple hung and painted with dark red hues. The witch was immediately surrounded by a host of gallant adorers, among whom I noticed rulers, sages, spendthrifts, priestly fathers of the church and founders of unselfish creeds. Their bearing was lofty and majestic, but their eyes glittered with fathomless passion. My uncanny companion floated among them like a legendary butterfly, causing the lips of her admirers to give forth flaming flattery. The rulers ascribed to her all the good fortune of their realms. The generals owed to her their invincible armies. To the creators of creeds, she seemed a glimmer issuing from eternal Heaven, and the bald-headed fathers hailed her as the mother of the universe.

The witch remained wholly unmoved by all these flatteries, which proceeded from greedy and weary lips. She hastened to the youths who were roaring like tigers in a corner of the hall. She vanished from my sight among them and I saw her no more. In spite of the cups, brimming with perfume, which were held out to me by many hands, and notwithstanding the marvelous fragrance rising to my face from the red lips of loveliest ladies, I kept a tight rein upon myself, for I knew that I was in hell. I did not wish to surrender to the power of the sinful lusts of these strange beings, and did my very best to remain cold to all I saw.

It has always been a habit of mine, when chancing to be in bad or menacing company, to seek to identify possible friends or foes, so as to forget my own sadness by seeking some and avoiding others. I now followed, or tried to follow, this habit, but I was a stranger to all that com-

pany, and all that company was strange to me. Intelligence, caught up from my previous life, made me wary of the throng, from whom I determined to hold myself aloof.

The passionate maidens laughed me to scorn, saying that I was only a herdsman's lout, sorrowfully searching for a stray lamb lost far within some gloomy forest. They said that an odor of sheep proceeded from my garments and that my eyes were dark with the shadows of the woods. They begged me to caress them in the grass like white ewes, for the grass was soft as satin. The worldly powers about me laughed aloud in ridicule, but I swallowed it all as I would vinegar.

A general movement suddenly occurred in the great hall and, from a door at one side, a massive and noble-looking old man entered, wiping the sweat from his brow with a gold embroidered handkerchief as he advanced. The lofty ones about fell upon their knees as they approached him, bending low that they might kiss the tips of his shoes. He did not cease his progress onward, but walked straight toward me, for I was the only one there still remaining erect among all the bowed backs of earth's mighty men.

"Why do you stand rooted there?" he asked calmly.

"I do not understand what all this means," I replied with a trembling voice.

"The eternal spectacle of the joys of the world."

"I was told that this was hell."

"It is the pleasure resort of the powers of hell."

"Where are the pains of hell we hear about in the world?"

"We hear about in the world!" he laughed, and then stopped short, as a scornful smile flitted over his face. "Pains of hell! Perhaps they exist in heaven. I don't know anything about it. Here only those are to be pitied who array themselves against us and refuse to prostrate themselves before our person and order."

"Then the tales of hell's sorrows are only lies?"

"Here we punish only those disobedient to us. We do so by driving them away until they are convinced of their error. Such people serve as examples to the rest of us."

"Have you no unhappy ones here at all?"

"Why? Do you want to render the happy unhappy? You'll belong to the crowd sooner than you think for." And he again laughed scornfully, and turned to go away. He was at once surrounded by the host of the mighty, who had angrily listened to the conversation.

"This stranger has scorned our maidens and rejected their caresses," exclaimed a toothless old graybeard, whose bony limbs were trembling as if shaken by the wind.

"Well, they will be the more fiery and passionate with you," replied the other, amid ringing laughter from the throng.

"He has brought a woman with him here who is more invincible than all my armies," cried a famous general. But others outshouted him.

"Richer than my empire!"

"Whiter than the light of eternal heaven!"

"More perfect than the holy mother of the universe!"

"Well, then, conquer her, strip her, blacken her and destroy her perfection, you fools!" cried the old man, from the midst of those about him, with a mighty voice, and every one was suddenly stricken with silence, as with a sudden blow.

"She has gone off with the young men," complained a piping voice.

"Do you want me to capture her for you?"

"Holy Father, the stranger has scorned you and has not reverently kissed your shoes!" said an old man, in whose countenance all the craft of the world was reflected. The holy father became red with wrath and turned to me in the fullest access of his anger. I could not avoid becoming red myself, and laughed for very shame. This only increased his rage and his thunderous voice bellowed forth with the order, "Throw him into hell's torture chamber!"

Like hungry wolves there plunged forth upon me the very same servants who, but a moment ago, had received me so obsequiously. They hustled and jostled me hither and thither, and every mighty one tried to give me a blow on the face. Their hands were cold as leeches and I trembled all over with repulsion and pain. But as all these

many hands kept striking my face, over and over, never ceasing, I was beset with so mad a desire to combat them that—I awoke from a deep and heavy sleep. From above, drops of water were falling upon my face and my whole scalp was well wet through. It was raining hard outside. "The roof of the Witch's Tavern must surely have a hole in it," I thought, springing out of bed. I was chilly and shivering, but mostly from the memories of what I had just experienced.

I was still held fast by the spell of what I had witnessed. I felt that I had discovered a new truth, which my soul was sure existed, but which was not fully clear to my consciousness. Now the rain was ceasing and the sun again shining forth over the moist, green earth. I opened my door and went out into the big room of the inn. The one-eyed old innkeeper was already squatting behind the long table. By daylight he seemed more ghostly than he had the evening before. He sat there like a blown-up old owl who has not been lucky in his night's hunting. He wearily raised his only eye, which was again in its rightful place. I remembered how the young woman had driven and belabored her husband on that nocturnal flight, and felt sorry for him.

"Already on your way? Won't you have a bit of fried chicken first."

The old man's question was not put as sharply as his remarks of last night.

"Oh, it's no matter. But I'll pay the score for you if you'll have a drink of your famous herb liquor," I replied, with an attempt at a jest.

"It isn't good in the morning, when you have the day before you."

"Why, one can travel as well by day as by night!"

"Night trips are not the best," he rejoined, as if plunged in memories.

"Then witches don't travel by day?"

"Not at all. They have to take care of the inn."

I ran away, afraid. The one-eyed old man knew everything. He seemed to have read my thoughts. I hastened forth upon the main road as if I were pursued, utterly

failing to observe the lovely things about me. I was sorely troubled, and fled away from that night which had now faded into the past. I wanted no more nights in any witches' inns.

JERZY

By WACLAW GRUBINSKI

THE dilapidated, wheezy locomotive gave off steam, whistled shrilly and slowly moved off. The cars followed their master hesitantly. The hum of farewells died in the distance. Hats and handkerchiefs waved a last *au revoir* to those who remained behind. A man ran after the fast-disappearing train to snatch a rose from a pretty girl leaning out of one of the car windows. The conductor jumped on the last car. The locomotive puffed and wheezed all the more as it sought to increase its speed.

Jerzy sighed deeply and wended his way to the exit of the station. The fresh air was particularly agreeable to him after the smoke-filled air of the station. He glanced about the brightly lighted square with its cabs, street cars, auto buses and motors dashing back and forth, as if rejoicing in the struggle for time. The bounteous health of his seventeen years made him long for an outlet for his forces. He readjusted his cap and set off on foot. He was tempted to take the street car, but the fascination of the bright lights and his youthful joy of living induced him to follow the crowd. Walking through the streets gave him a sense of superiority which made him feel fit for anything which life might have in store for him. As he was crossing a street corner he saw a man talking to a woman in a taxi. He was struck by the singular resemblance of the man to his father. But no, this was impossible, for he had just left his parents on the train a few moments before. Jerzy did not like to think of his father at this time. He loved his parents, but he was now to be alone in Warsaw for two or three days and he wanted to profit by his liberty. For the first time in his life he was to be allowed to shift for himself. He could take his meals in a restaurant and prepare his own breakfast as if he were a

hardened bachelor. In the evening he was to send the neighbor's servant for some bread, ham and milk. These were his mother's orders. Jerzy kissed his mother with almost undue eagerness and awaited impatiently her departure. What fun it would be to be quite free. He looked a hundred times at his watch. He finally became so eager for his first real liberty that he was forced to solve some algebraic problems to make the time pass more quickly. At last the time came for his mother to leave—ten o'clock. Soon the luggage was being put into the cab and they were off for the station. The wheeze and whistle of the locomotive were, for him, the symbols of unfettered liberty. He had now no master, no chains, no bridle; a man to whom the world could not say "don't." He could do what he wanted now. The blood surged in his veins and made his ears hum as if they echoed the resonance of the sea. His cheeks grew purplish red. Walking along the street as if on thin ice, he was the acme of suppleness, of health, of youthful energy.

It was only natural, therefore, that Jerzy should not be overjoyed to meet a man who so resembled his father. He considered taking a cab and driving to the Aleje. At this moment, however, his eye was attracted by a large café, brightly lighted. He entered. The room was filled with people, who pushed and crowded one another, seeking vainly to find a place. The air was stifling, but no one seemed to pay attention in the mad rush for a seat. The orchestra on the terrace was playing a fox trot. The perspiring waiters wormed their way through the crowd as if they were passing through a jungle, bearing nonchalantly on their heads huge trays of coffee, tea and little cakes. Next to Jerzy there was a very pretty young girl, who was joking with several men. A thin man of swarthy complexion, prematurely bald, had just greeted her. He stood with his hat in one hand, and her hand in the other. Jerzy heard him say:

"I am not lying. By God, I am not lying."

"You have chosen a good witness," replied a fat, middle-aged fellow, who appeared to be the young woman's husband.

"You might just as well cover up that bald spot on your head."

Jerzy burst out laughing. Suddenly it seemed to him that he heard his mother's voice. But no, it was impossible. It was only the waiter.

Another man with white hair pointed to the bald-headed man and exclaimed:

"He's a clever fellow, but he's already lost his hair at that game."

Jerzy looked around the huge room. The music continued louder and louder. The glasses clinked and the plates and silverware rattled in discord with the music. There were more people and less chairs than before. Jerzy disconsolately made his way out to the street and jumped into a cab.

"To the Aleje!" he commanded.

Reclining comfortably on the soft cushions, Jerzy inclined his head forward to prevent the wind from carrying off his hat. The cab jumped up and down on the bumpety road. It made the turns on two wheels, which made Jerzy laugh. But before they had gone very far he began to shiver, for he had forgotten that it was winter and he had no overcoat. He began to cough and sneeze. Discouraged, he ordered the coachman to turn around and take him home. When the cab reached its destination Jerzy jumped down.

"How much do I owe?" he demanded of the driver.

"Oh, I'll leave it to you. You're a right nice fellow," said the coachman.

Jerzy handed him four zloty.

"That isn't enough for such a drive," complained the driver. "My horses are all tired."

"That's quite enough," replied Jerzy with decision.

This newly acquired brusqueness awed the coachman, and also Jerzy. The former accepted the four zloty reluctantly and watched the schoolboy ring the bell.

The janitor opened the door.

"Some one has brought you a tart from the café," he announced solemnly.

"Long ago?"

"Just after your parents left."

"Where is it?"

"In my room, sir, because the apartment is closed."

"Bring it upstairs," commanded the boy.

"Directly."

"I will go up ahead of you."

They went up to the second floor. Jerzy did not have to ring the bell. He proudly took out his key and, for the first time in his life, opened the door to the apartment. He amused himself going from room to room and turning on the light. He felt like a real person now. He walked twice around the oak table in the dining room and sat down in the armchair in the corner. He looked savagely at the table. He felt an irresistible impulse to kick it. He felt as if he would like to show his domination over it. He would have liked to put it in his pocket; to squeeze it in his hand, like a wet sponge; to turn it over; to drive an axe through the middle of it; to pour scalding water upon it; to do with it whatever he would like to, anything, anything! "Nobody has the right to say no to me," he thought triumphantly. "I am the master of the house."

The janitor interrupted his strange reflections, bringing a large package, enveloped in brown paper.

"Put it on the table," said Jerzy. "Here is a tip for you. Don't forget to close the door behind you."

The sleepy janitor went out, mumbling his thanks.

Jerzy cut the string with a penknife and opened the package. It contained a huge cake, almost as large as a bicycle wheel, which was daintily placed on a china plate. He stood still, regarding it for a moment. Then, slowly, he cut off a morsel and began to eat it. He walked towards the open door, a handful of cake in his mouth. He stopped. Then, as if in a dream, he gave a hasty glance in the direction of his father's bedroom. He turned on the light and entered the room, seating himself at his father's desk. His eyes fell upon an embroidered screen which hid his father's bed from the rest of the room. The young lad's eyes sparkled with joy. "I want to sleep in my father's bed tonight, and why not, after all? If I want to sleep there I am free to do so." Jerzy awoke suddenly from this strange

dream. He felt in a malachite cup which lay on the writing table. His father often left the key to his safe there. The duplicate key was probably on the writing table also, but hidden in a snuffbox, or, perhaps, hung on a nail near an old picture, or, again . . . Jerzy jumped up. He knew about the flower pots and the little palms which grow in them. He went to the window where the plants were growing on the sill. There he found the second key. He took it stealthily as if he feared that he were being watched and put the plant back in its usual place. He was trembling now. "I can open the safe," he thought. "Yes, I will open the safe. Right now—immediately. I have the right to do so. I can do anything. I can unveil its darkest secrets. I can steal the money and jewels. I can also take the papers, the letters of change, bonds and receipts. I can burn them. I am allowed to do whatever I want to. There is no limit to the gratification of my desires."

Jerzy jumped up and went over to the corner where the safe was standing. He turned the combination stealthily and soon the keyhole appeared. He tried the key which he had found under the palm. It fitted. He turned it three times and the door of the safe opened. Before doing anything more, he had better look around the apartment again. Not that Jerzy was afraid, but he wanted to reassure himself that he was alone. He went to the dining room. He remembered, that morning, having seen a bottle of white wine in the cupboard. He looked and found the bottle still there, with an empty glass beside it. He filled it many times to the brim. No one told him when to stop. No one could. He could do whatever he liked. If he chose he could finish the bottle. After having finished his third glass, however, he chose to make the rounds of the other rooms, going successively from the dining room to his mother's room, the hall, his own room, the bathroom, the kitchen, lighting the electricity as he went. Then he returned feverishly to the safe. With the key from the malachite bowl he opened the inner door of the safe and began to examine its contents. There were several wire baskets on the shelves, two empty, the others filled with gold coins, which were assorted in rolls of paper. He took

out the baskets and placed them on the writing table. With a curious gleam in his eyes, he spread the golden coins out before him on the table. He glanced at the windows. No, the curtains were tightly drawn. He crumpled the paper covering of the coins and threw it on the floor. He thought that he would pick it up later on. He wanted to keep the secret of his adventure from his father. Meanwhile, he laughed gayly. He arranged the gold in little heaps. What a pretty picture it made. His father must have meant to pay his bills with it. He covered the gold with his hands. The thought that there were hundreds of zloty in his possession thrilled him. What nice things one could buy in exchange for this yellow metal! This handful of gold was the key to the world. Now he possessed the key to everything, everything in the world. He caressed the coins, taking them in his fingers, one by one. He could do with it as he wanted to. It merely depended upon him to decide. He laughed hoarsely. His eyes glowed with a strange, unnatural passion, almost insane. His hands perspired. His ears burned. His body trembled. His imagination conjured strange images of women, wine and song. He saw again the smiling young woman in the café and the man who accosted her. She came and sat beside him. He caressed her. He would be kind to her. Yes, he loved her. Much, yes, very much.

Jerzy shivered so that he dropped several coins which he held in his hand. He leaned over towards the safe and from a small box drew out a small oil painting. It was a picture of Leda and the Swan. It was as if Leda were the beautiful young woman. The boy's face grew hideous with passion. He placed the picture on the writing table and regarded it longingly. He was now mad, quite mad. He gnashed his teeth. He got up and began to walk aimlessly around the table. He began to wander through the other rooms. He went to the kitchen door, turned the key, undid the bolt and opened the door. The stairway was pitch dark. Across the hall a thin jet of light could be seen in the neighbor's apartment. Jerzy coughed. Then he coughed more loudly. His cough echoed on the stairway. Across the hall the door opened. A young girl appeared

in the doorway. She peered timidly into the darkness of the hall while striving to continue to mend the stocking in the half light reflected from the apartment.

"What. You aren't asleep yet?" she inquired. "Are you ill, perhaps?"

"Oh, yes," replied the boy.

"Can't I get you some tea?" offered the maid.

"Yes, some tea."

The maid hesitated. After all he was only a neighbor.

"It is very late," she countered.

"No, only half after eleven," replied the schoolboy. "I am so thirsty, and I don't know how to light the alcohol lamp."

The girl smiled.

"I have got everything," continued Jerzy, "alcohol, tea and even a nice cake. I can't eat cake without tea."

"You must pour some alcohol in the lamp," suggested the girl, "and——"

She broke off and disappeared in her apartment. Jerzy returned to the kitchen of his parents' flat and took a bottle of alcohol from the cupboard. At this moment the maid crossed the hallway and entered the kitchen. She took the bottle of alcohol from him and filled the lamp. When she tried, unsuccessfully, to light the lamp with a broken match, Jerzy demanded jokingly:

"Why didn't you close the hall door?"

His heart was beating like a sledgehammer and his thoughts grew confused. He was alone with a girl. She was even fairly pretty. He was the master. If he wanted to kiss her no one could tell him that he must not. He was the king; the despot who could act as he might choose.

The girl was saying something. Jerzy could not understand. She repeated her sentence, but once again he was obliged to demand, "What do you say?"

She drew herself up straight and looked at the boy, her yellowish mop of hair presenting a strange contrast to almost coal black eyes.

Jerzy gained control of himself. In almost normal voice he queried, "Does it burn? I mean the lamp."

The girl did not reply. Instead she silently filled the

pitcher with cold water and placed it on the fire. Only then did she say, "The tea will be ready in a moment. Why, you don't even know how to make tea," she added mockingly.

The boy smiled and nodded his admission of ignorance.

"Where is the box of tea? In the cupboard, I suppose," she continued.

"Yes, I am sure it is there," replied Jerzy. "Take some napkins from the cupboard at the same time. There are the plates and the spoons also. Come with me."

The maid followed Jerzy obediently to the dining room. There he pointed to the torn wrapping paper on the floor.

"I can pick it up," offered the girl.

"No, no, later on. Let's first prepare the supper table," suggested Jerzy. "Cut the pie first of all."

"It is not very hard to do."

"Then tell me your name."

"Mine?"

"Yes, your name."

"Wanda."

"I have a cousin who is called Wanda. I call her Lulu for short. Let's look for a knife," continued Jerzy.

"It must be in that drawer," she suggested. "Did Madame leave the keys?"

"The keys are there. Look, Lulu!" He pulled open the drawer. "We never hide the keys except against thieves."

The maid approached the cupboard.

"You mean that they could steal things quicker," she said mockingly.

"Yes, certainly, that is it. The knives are in that drawer, the lower left-hand one, and the napkins are in the one right above."

She could not find anything. He watched her and then added in a reproachful tone, "I see that you are sleepy."

"Now no more," replied the girl.

The young boy pretended to arrange the cupboard, but suddenly he bent forward close to the girl and whispered, "I will call you Lulu, may I not?"

She did not answer. She took the folded tablecloth and held it awkwardly, as if she did not know what to do with it.

"Do set the table for two," said Jerzy. "It isn't much fun to be alone. We'll have some tea."

"I've already had some," she replied.

Jerzy looked at her wistfully. "It isn't much fun to be alone. I would like so to talk with some one."

"Please take out the napkins," she commanded, "and I will arrange the small plates. Just two covers for you and me."

He looked at the girl longingly.

"What is the matter?" she queried.

"Oh, nothing."

"You are foolish," she informed him.

Jerzy took two wine glasses from the cupboard and drew near the girl.

"Won't you have some?" he asked kindly.

"The wine?"

"Yes."

"I don't like wine."

"It is sweet wine, just like sugar. Please don't refuse."

The girl regarded Jerzy inquisitively.

"And if I should be tipsy?" she demanded.

"This wine is like water," he assured her, filling up her glass.

They drank.

"Do you like it?" he asked anxiously.

"Yes, it is nice and sweet."

Jerzy drew the girl's arm close to his body.

"I wanted to tell you—yes—what did I want to tell you?" he said. "Oh, I know. We should visit the whole apartment."

"But why?" she queried, a bit worried by this strange declaration.

He gave even stranger reasons. He played with the girl as if she were a doll. She was at his mercy. She was in his hands. If he chose she must follow him wherever he might want to go. She must obey him. No one could say no to him. He laughed weirdly. Why, if he wanted to, he could throw her on the carpet and drag her around by the heels. He felt himself extraordinarily strong.

They went into his father's room.

"Just look at the gold here," he shouted. He picked up a handful of yellow coins and spread them out feverishly on the table. "Wait a minute!" he continued. "I will find some pearls to hang around your neck."

Jerzy opened the safe and began to take out the earrings, bracelets, rings, necklaces and other jewelry.

Wanda was frightened. She remained motionless, struck dumb by this strange person who fingered thousands of zloty so carelessly. When, however, Jerzy gave her three strings of blood-red corals, her emotion did not prevent her from crying ecstatically:

"How pretty! How pretty!"

He seized her in his arms. She struggled but could not free herself.

"They are for you, for you," he whispered hoarsely. "No one can reproach me for having given them to you because they are mine, and only mine."

"But what will your mother say?" remonstrated Wanda.

"About what?"

"About the corals."

"You are so silly. Why, no one ever opens this safe and, besides, you have only to hide them in your trunk if you like them."

He seized her once more. Wanda screamed. "Oh, you are hurting me. Stop! I feel dizzy. Come, let us sit down."

They sat down on the sofa. Wanda looked at the boy, whose face was contorted with strange emotions. She laughed hysterically. He took her in his arms. He was quite angry that she was laughing.

"Please leave me a moment, Jerzy!" implored the girl. "Come, I will tell you something nice about yourself. Do be nice, Jerzy. Yes, I know you are Jerzy. I see you every day when you go to school. Oh, you don't know how I have always longed to talk to you. Have you ever seen me, Jerzy, in the window?"

.

"Now I must go," implored Wanda.

"Stay!" commanded Jerzy.

"It is late."

"No, it isn't two o'clock yet. Your mistress is asleep."

"I am afraid. Perhaps she woke and rang for me."

"But why should she ring the bell at night?"

"Do I know? Something might have happened."

"Do wait a while yet."

"No, I did not even put out the light. I must go now. I will go. I must go. Let me go at once. Do you hear?"

"I won't let you go."

"You hurt my hand. Stop!"

"Why do you try to escape then?"

"I can't struggle any more. I am tired. Oh, I am afraid, afraid, so afraid, Jerzy."

"You shall not leave!"

"Now I am going. It is three o'clock. Help me get up!"
The girl became hysterical. She struggled, but in vain. Finally she relaxed from sheer exhaustion, in a sort of semi-coma.

Jerzy regarded her long, svelte figure stretched out, motionless, before him. A strip of her shirtwaist was torn, revealing the flesh beneath. He touched her, as if to assure himself that her presence was not an hallucination. Her feet shivered; her mouth opened, as if to gasp for air. There were deep circles under her eyes. Looking at this girl gave Jerzy a sense of unlimited power. Once more he felt that curious reaction to his new-found liberty. This creature belonged to him. He could tear her to pieces if he chose. He could crush her to atoms. No one could say no to him. Her life lay in his hands. His eyes burned fiendishly. He clenched and unclenched his hands like a wild animal. He began slowly and methodically to strangle the girl. There was a terrible scream as his work began to tell. His fingers closed about her neck like iron tongs. He tossed her body up and down, never relaxing his horrible grip. She struggled, but to no avail. They slipped. They fell to the floor, the girl's head striking with a resounding thud. Jerzy let go and grew almost sane once more. Horror-stricken, he contemplated the girl writhing and groaning on the floor. She tried to get up but could not.

Finally she succeeded. With her hand she pushed the table aside. She cast a pitiful glance at Jerzy.

"I can kill you!" he whispered harshly.

She quaked with fear.

"I can do with you what I like, whatever I choose."

Wanda gazed at the boy with the look of a wild beast at bay. He was mumbling strange, unconnected words. She fainted once more.

Jerzy leaned over her. He shook her. This time it was his turn to be panic-stricken. She was lying motionless.

"Get up! Get up!" he screamed. She did not move. With his finger he opened her eyes, but they closed as soon as he let go of them.

"Listen! You are in my power!" he screamed.

She did not hear.

"I order you to get up. You understand? I order you to get up, and at once!"

But the girl was lying motionless.

"I want," he cried, "I want you to get up."

He jumped up and down, quite mad. He knelt down before her. He took her by the neck.

"Enough! Enough! You hear what I say? I want you to hear me. Listen! I order you to hear me!"

But the girl was lying like dead.

Jerzy jumped up and began to beat his hands against the wall, as if to seek help from this invisible devil. He ran to the table, took the gold, and, holding it in his hands, ran back to the unconscious girl. With his whole strength he threw the money at her mute body. It shivered. She uttered an almost imperceptible groan. Jerzy's fear increased. The girl began to grow stiff.

The boy continued to scream hoarsely, "Get up! Get up! Get up!"

Cold sweat covered his face. He ran screaming from room to room, mumbling and shrieking by turns. "I can do anything, anything."

He rushed to the window and opened it. The curtain fell to the floor, so precipitously did he open the lower sash. The dark night air calmed him. But there behind him she was lying. Was she still there? He dared not

look. Yes, he would look. Oh, yes, she was there, lying motionless, near the door. She was crawling. Yes, she was crawling towards the window.

Jerzy drove his finger nails deep into the window frame. Was she crawling towards him? But no, she was lying motionless as before. He was mistaken. She was coming towards him, nearer, ever nearer. He wanted to run away but he could not move his legs. Nor could he take his glance from this dreadful apparition, always moving nearer, nearer. Soon she would be beside him. Was she really moving? Yes! Yes! With a supreme effort Jerzy raised himself to the window sill and turned his face towards the dark, without. At the same moment he felt her hands on his shoulders, hands which crept stealthily towards his neck. His whole body was trembling with fright.

"I can do all I want, all, all, all," he moaned piteously.

But she! What does she want? "You are strangling me! Oh! Oh! Does nobody hear me?" Jerzy leaned still farther out of the window to escape this awful crawling thing. He began to fall into the still darkness below.

THE OTHER WOMAN

By CLAUDIO BASTO

OUTSIDE, a fine rain, obscuring the melancholy afternoon, seemed to darken the air as with a thick smoke. The feathery tops of the trees were hardly visible. Their drooping, moveless branches were contracted together like human backs humped downward the better to shed the chilly downpour. The gloomy light penetrated the windowpanes, pearly with fine raindrops, and only threw more painful shadows into the gathering darkness within the room. And Guida, pale against her white counterpane, and oppressed with a presentiment of impending doom, turned back to memory slowly, slowly, as one who would savor life as long as possible.

It was again in the winter, but now on a bright and radiant day, amid aromatic acacias in full flower casting downward their golden showers, that she and Eduardo had exchanged their first kiss. How that kiss had been imagined, enjoyed and delayed! How strange and inexplicably dear that moment, heroically braved at last, which had united those two souls by its curious, novel spell—those souls which had for so long been permitted only glances, words, silence and mere simple, occasional contacts! Ah, how clearly those moments were remembered, how distinctly they would ever be remembered! A gentle breeze, perfumed and warm, and touched, as it were, by some angelic hand, murmured low as it shook the yellow, lacy blossoms of the acacias, which now let fall a slow, fine, golden shower, and their lips were at last united as the deep blue sky stretched overhead, and as the sunlight tranquilly warmed the loveliness of the afternoon.

For it was after a moment of hesitation and shyness that Eduardo had placed a sudden, devouring kiss upon her throat. Ah, she had never dreamed of such a kiss. Palpitating with the unexpected and astounding revela-

tion, she felt her whole being enwrapped in a strange torpor and, yielding, she abandoned herself upon his breast, that strong and protecting shelter, as a fragile, slender vine twines about a sturdy tree. In the nebulous uncertainty of this strange, new dream, she experienced a premonition that their two souls must meet to melt into one. When at last she released herself from this firm, uniting clasp, and from the embrace of his dear arms, she felt that all her soul had been abandoned to him. Intoxicating and eternal, she felt the fragrance of Eduardo's being penetrate into the remotest recesses of her very soul. These things came back to her slowly, slowly.

In moments of solitary reverie which followed, it seemed to her that she was changed. Yes, indeed, she was no longer the same. The sensation imparted by those kisses, given under the dear and kindly shelter of the trees which sweetly perfumed every tender retreat within the garden, tingled in every fiber of her being. She could have no doubt of the vague anxiety and unrest, of the formless and obscure desires, and of the inexplicable attraction which she perceived for Eduardo within every atom of her soul and body. Her sentiment was one of a vague, sorrowful kind of pleasure which she enjoyed with a curious eagerness. It was allied to despair. She did not understand the strange and painfully elusive satisfaction which it gave her.

She soon began to feel herself more a part of Eduardo, more devoted to him and, in his presence, she sometimes resisted her inclination and tried to combat her temptation to kiss him. But after that first warm kiss bestowed by Eduardo, she felt herself expanding more and more. She eagerly crushed her tender breasts against his firm bosom, desiring to be clasped more closely, to be held more tightly against his flesh, and to give back to him the passionate kisses which burned upon her lips. She rested finally without a thought, lost in abstract abandon, and sustained, heavily and inertly, within Eduardo's arms, feeling withal a sense of ungratified desire. What was the meaning of this strange enigma which tortured her?

In Eduardo's absence, she experienced long dreams, now

unrelated, now gliding from one concept to another, which often left her remaining motionless in endless ecstasies. She dreamed of the many things she would tell Eduardo. Through her mind floated a thousand prayers, a thousand doubts, a thousand fears, a thousand promises. At his approach she was fascinated, without volition, without ideas, and a mysterious vibration seemed to flow through every nerve. She tried to visualize his eyes, his gestures, his mouth. In her fancy, she lifted her delicate, palpitating lips to his, desiring his kisses, feeling a frenzy of kisses uniting their moist and breathing mouths.

Yes, she remembered it all, slowly, slowly.

She remembered the inquiet, violent joy of those girlhood days. She revived, one by one and in succession without the slightest order, the different moments of that existence, recalling even those which were most trivial, as one might turn over the leaves of a beloved and well-known book, looking at the front of it, glancing at the back of it, and reading stray passages scattered here and there.

When Eduardo returned to her they became children again. They became united in an overwhelming joy which happily banished, in wild delight, the unsolved inquietude which had tortured her. How Eduardo scolded her when she told him of her unreasoning fears! How he laughed, one November day, as he presented her with a fine, ivory-handled dagger and she almost tearfully expressed vague apprehension at the thought it aroused of a sinister death! And Eduardo, still laughing, pointed to a great cluster of red blossoms, with the jesting remark that they were tragically colored with a stream of smoking blood! And he held up in the sunlight the shining blade, delicate as a stiletto, which made one shiver so as the cold gleams danced within it! How well she remembered it all! Finally, though, the dagger became a mere commonplace object, which was left lying about on the table or shamefully used to cut the leaves of books with.

Sometimes her fancies seemed strange. Sometimes curious coincidences occurred, but they were mere coincidences, as when Eduardo brought her a bunch of lovely dahlias and,

coming softly behind her, seized them and cut off their stems with the dagger. Oh, of course they got used to the dagger. Time gradually obliterated her dread of it, and it finally became a mere good companion, harmless and useful. It had been in this very room on her wedding day. Her wedding, her married life!

She was at first dazzled by her marvelous, inexpressible happiness. The brilliance about her was so great that she could see nothing, being so blinded that she could not even judge fully how happy she was. The very pupils of her eyes were so dilated by the light that she was rendered sightless. Her hands seemed to have suddenly received a shower of lovely and wonderful gems, forming a heap of glowing and indistinguishable units.

Later, she gradually began to be accustomed to her joy and could analyze her happiness. She could fully savor it now, both ardently and calmly. She could examine all its aspects, study every desire. Her whole life had become a delirium of love.

She remembered—she remembered.

The thought of dying, coming suddenly upon her in the midst of these lovely memories, filled her with infinite sadness, and she suddenly felt in her eyes the painful warmth of bitter tears.

Night was falling.

The north wind now rising began to shake the little garden with heavy gusts.

Eduardo brought in a light. The slender flame of the lamp, wavering to and fro, softly illuminated the room with flickering lights and shadows.

Guida's tears, trembling in the light of her eyes like the stars when bathed with moonlight, fell upon her face, scattering scintillations as they dropped. Eduardo watched her, greatly moved.

The gleams from these bitter tears, shining so gently and so sadly, pierced the soul of Eduardo as a beam of winter sunlight melts its way through the snow and filled him with ineffable tenderness. From the depths of the room she saw him coming. He took her face in his hands, whose gentleness somewhat dispelled her pain with their

current of affectionate tenderness. In a short time, however, Guida's presentiment of death returned upon her, and her eyes began again to reflect illimitable sadness, which sorrowfully buried Eduardo in gloom as it flowed in upon him like a dark wave.

And she began to talk, as if to herself, and in a slow, almost impersonal way, of her death. She said that he would soon forget her and would soon be loving another woman. And her jealousy, her frightful jealousy, which was buried deep within her, came pouring forth in a bitter flood from her trembling lips. She would die with that terrible distress, that sorrow of her life, in envy of the other woman who would replace her. How could Eduardo love another as he had loved her? No other woman on earth would love Eduardo as she had. The "other woman" could never possess *her* adoration of Eduardo! She, she alone really loved him. Nobody else could even know how to love him. She wept with rage and despair, appealing frantically to him, as in a febrile agony, to throw her as she was dying a few pitiful assurances which she might clasp to her soul forever.

Eduardo talked to her a long time, in a low murmur. In order to calm her wild mood, he ended by smothering all her doubts, her apprehension, her fears and her jealousy in a long, vibrating kiss. He held her, as she held him, at last, in confidence and serenity within his arms, in the convulsive embrace with which he might seek to hold back, for an instant, the Heavenly Virgin, Virgin of Sorrows, from a flight away from earth.

He finally released her with a caress almost theatrical in its emphatic sweetness, to let her fall into an amorous state of lassitude and, weary with his prolonged vigil, threw himself on the couch where he fell asleep immediately, slumbering amid the rising voices of the winds, blowing unceasingly about the house.

For a long time she lay plunged in a soothing lethargy, as if rendered inert by the memory of Eduardo's loving voice. Alas, poor creature! the lovely dream faded from her mind and again that horrible presentiment of impending death returned to torture her soul. The thousand

miserable impulses calmed for a time within her broke forth in still more ungovernable rage, releasing themselves in an indomitable burst of passion.

In a desperate attempt to distract herself, Guida determined to fix her attention on her beloved little room and the things within it, softly shining in the light. Through the window she could perceive the garden and remembered the last time she had seen that window open. Eduardo had opened it for her, and a wave of fresh coolness had entered, to temper the warmth of the room. She had felt herself enveloped delightfully in his being, full of vigorous health. She had enjoyed it, tasted it, breathed it all in. Her soul, thus fully penetrated by his very essence, had become stimulated, restored, and, voluptuously, she had allowed her glance to rove far into the velvety azure of the skies, then cast it down into the pretty garden, and buried it for a long time among the highest branches of the sweet acacia trees. Then, at a little distance from the window, she saw her table on which were her favorite books. She absorbed herself in the memory of the happy moments she had passed at that table, just at bedtime. The torment in her soul, however, continually surged forth, madly scattering, in wild disorder, all the efforts which Guida frantically made to quiet herself.

Finally, she managed to concentrate herself on the contemplation of a portrait, hanging on the wall before her. It was a large and very fine portrait, made on her wedding day. It represented herself and Eduardo, very close together and looking at each other with eyes which glowed with happiness. She feverishly sought memory after memory with which to choke down the tortures which raged violently within her heart. At her left hand, there lay her only love, her dear Eduardo, carelessly extended on the couch, sleeping honestly and healthfully, his face wholly serene. Guida feasted her eyes, full of affectionate transports, on the sweet serenity of that dear face. The immense passion for the beloved companion which gave her such joy silenced the fantasies of her diseased spirit. She lay there as if enchanted, gazing long and steadfastly upon her sole and only love.

The spirit of adoration which consoled her, gave way, after a time, and the old cares and sufferings returned, as they had so often. Her beloved Eduardo would belong to another woman. All the perturbations of her troubled soul began again to afflict her. Struggling with herself, she resumed her painfully minute examination of all the objects about her in her pretty nest, now, she felt, forever lost to her. So she continued the weary vigil, endeavoring to use her memories and dear associations to narcotize her doubts, obsessions and dread.

A bell somewhere outside began to strike midnight.

The first stroke, coming suddenly, harshly, hoarsely, pierced the night with a raucous note as loud and startling as the cry of a peacock. It struck on Guida's ear violently, rudely. The wind was stirring the trees, whose foliage swung to and fro in a stifled, mournful lament. Another and another peal rang out in a gloomy knell, tolling forth in a long, lingering echo, sadly resounding on the vibrating air.

Midnight. Guida raised herself in her bed, beside herself. Her voice seemed to be confined as within a tight, strangling knot. Her skin was covered with icy perspiration. She opened her mouth convulsively and her nostrils dilated widely with her deep and rapid breathing. She tried to cry out, to shout aloud, to summon Eduardo, but her throat contracted painfully, stifling her and rendering her silent and impotent.

The sound of the bell continued to peal out, in waves of agony. The strokes fell upon the night regularly, without interruption, imperturbably, inexorably. Midnight! Her state of anxiety was quickly exchanged for a feeling of certainty. She knew, now, beyond a doubt that the moment was the black one consecrated to deeds of evil. It was the infernal instant of unhealthy magic, of satanic rites, of witchcraft and sorcery.

Midnight! She was to die. She knew that she would never survive this noisome hour. She felt the truth, she was convinced absolutely, she knew, positively and beyond the shadow of a doubt, that her time was come. She was seized and possessed by a mighty, irresistible, disordered, superstitious obsession.

From the uncertain and nebulous gloom about her, which melted together in a confused whole the objects within the room, the fine large portrait hanging on the wall suddenly stood out in sharp and distinct relief and clearness. The portrait grew larger and larger. It danced mockingly before her vision. It became a living thing, which moved, swayed and beckoned as she gazed upon it distractedly, fascinated. Who was that woman in the portrait? Was it herself? Was that she standing there? No, no, no! Never! It was not she. It was that other, the "other woman." There stood the "other woman," close to her Eduardo's side, about to steal her Eduardo and carry him away forever.

She strained upward, stretched herself to the utmost, raised herself supremely as far upward as she could. She extended her poor, insane head toward the portrait which so evilly fascinated her. She stared fixedly at it with great, lustrous eyes, panting with dread, chill with a cold that crept remorselessly nearer and nearer to her heart.

The bell sounded forth again. Still once more. The strokes struck upon her ear only to die away faintly, ever more vaguely, finally becoming dissipated as they mingled with the murmur of the wind.

So she was to die! And the image of that other woman came there to mock and insult her at the very hour of her death! And Eduardo, close by all the time, was plunged in infamous slumber! He was probably dreaming, dreaming already, of the "other woman!" Guida stretched out a nervous, quivering hand, in a gesture of tortured menace, to threaten both her sleeping husband and the frightfully mocking portrait that danced so derisively before her. She menaced her husband fiercely as he stood beside that "other woman" in the portrait. She tugged frantically at her throat, as if to release the cruel knot that confined her larynx and stifled her cry.

She leaped from her bed. She was shivering as in a violent shock. Dizzy, tottering, ready to fall, her yielding limbs bent beneath her, almost breaking. The lamplight slowly flickered to and fro. She stretched herself forward, seizing the bedstead and clinging to it to hold herself

erect. She attempted a few wavering and uncertain steps. Then she moved forward, blindly, very directly ahead, her dressing gown falling about her in ample folds. Her hair, tumbling downward in black waves, descended in a cataract upon her bare shoulders, glided down upon her naked breast and lost itself within the surrounding shadows. Another final peal of the midnight chime rang out heavily, muffled, dull. She heard it for a long time as it echoed and reëchoed in low, diminishing and receding tones.

She tried another step forward. Groping, trembling, supporting herself against the furniture, tortured with agony, she staggered onward to the portrait where the sight of Eduardo and the "other woman" pierced her heart as with a thousand needles. She frantically kissed the portrait, and pressed her face close to it as if she would embrace her beloved in spasms of voluptuous delight. Onward, still onward, she proceeded, a true madonna of martyrdom, madonna of jealousy, panting, stifling, hoarse sounds of her breathing breaking stridently on the air, until she finally reached the heavy curtains draping the window. Stars were shining outside against the tragic blackness of the night. The branches of the trees swayed heavily to and fro, like waving funereal plumes, dark and mournful, suggesting graves and tombs.

Still another mournful stroke of the bell resounded forth, metallic, vibrating, sending its shock against the window like a gust of sudden wind. Guida recoiled in a paroxysm of fear and jealousy, and staggered, tottering, to the table. Supporting herself against it, she touched with her delicate fingers, which were numb and trembling with mortal coldness, the sharp blade of the familiar dagger. In a resistless impulse, she convulsively clasped her hand fast about its ivory hilt.

She then wandered dizzily to the portrait, nearly falling, in her agitation, over the couch where Eduardo was peacefully sleeping. There, over her head, that "other woman" was smiling in triumph, with parted lips expressing both petulance and mockery. The feel of the dagger within her hand imparted growing force to Guida. She opened and fixed the blade, from which glittered sparkling reflections

which laughed, as it were, with mocking and sarcastic gleams, as the teeth of the "other woman," seemingly, gave forth brilliant fire from within her smiling lips.

Now, floating out from the leafy verdure of the trees sounded once again the hollow reverberation of the bell's funereal tolling. Was it the last peal but one—was it not rather the last of all? Ah, her final moment had come. The bell was marking the last instant of her life. She stood there enveloped in mortal cold. Her breathing was arrested and asphyxia overpowered her. Her throat contracted in a frightful spasm. The fingers of death were embracing and crushing her breast, in a fatal clasp. For a moment she tried vainly to use her reason, to cry out for aid, to escape the grim terror which had seized her. Suddenly, she became aware, in perception piercing her fright and delirious agony, Eduardo, her husband, lying before her in sweet and profound slumber, calm, tranquil, provokingly undisturbed, wholly unaffected by the storm within his wife's being. There he lay, smiling happily, as he dreamed of that "other woman!" The "other woman!" The horrible "other woman!" Guida felt herself within the grasp of a swift, insane, uncontrollable impulse. Rushing heavily onward, she buried the deadly dagger blade in her husband's breast. Then, her life ebbing away as the fierce wave of power and frantic energy subsided to leave her exhausted, panting, powerless, she fell staggering across the lifeless corpse whose features gleamed coldly upward. In a spasm of desperate insanity, she withdrew the dagger from her husband's breast and madly plunged its bright point within her heart.

MIOARA'S WEDDING DAY

By NINON CARABELLA

THE following story is but one morbid episode taken from the diary of my life.

It is a painful confession that still causes me untold anguish and contrition.

At that epoch, because of my shock of blond hair and my blue eyes, I was more readily taken for a native of northern climes than for a Levantine girl. And yet I, Rodica, a strange, morbid and strikingly exotic girl in appearance, was the issue of a marriage of a Roumanian nobleman with a fairy-like Armorican maiden. My composite nature would cause Parisian women to murmur: "Another one of those fatal Oriental girls!" and others from Bucharest to exclaim: "How very eccentric these French women are!"

Up until that time, however, my character had merely simmered without boiling over. I had an extremely sensitive soul, my nervous temperament was highly fanciful and my heart was quite pitiless. I was alternately vivacious and melancholy.

The years have taken it upon themselves to abolish these contrasting moods so that at the present time . . .

But what does it matter what I have actually become!

Here, then—with no additions—is the morbid episode which marked the end of my girlhood days and determined my whole destiny.

It is a painful confession that still causes me untold anguish and contrition.

I

January 15, 1902, old style.

"Well, little girl, how are things going today?"

"Very badly, my father. The devil is tormenting me more than ever."

"Do you mean to say that you, Rodica, a civilized

young girl, are going to encourage demonism! Leave such rash beliefs as this to our peasant folk. If they believe more in Satan than in God it is not an example for you to follow."

"I should like to be exorcised. Father, I am worn out by too frequent spells of languidness and with the coming of night I am haunted by far too mysterious visions. I have too many nightmares . . ."

"Did you dream last night?"

"As I always do. I saw the same disheveled nudities such as fauns and bacchantes dancing around and around . . ."

"Cursed spirits, no doubt!"

"Father, beyond all doubt Colonel Syreano's orderly was bewitched by his mother-in-law and some one, it seems, has just broken the weird spell."

"Some one? Don't you know who it was?"

"Do tell me."

"Well, then! It was the Colonel himself who chased the evil spirit away from his orderly. And can't you guess what he did to accomplish this?"

"Certainly not!"

"Well, the orderly was occupied in polishing his master's boots. And all the while he was whining and whimpering and making wry faces. 'So it is really true then,' said Syreano to him, 'that you are possessed of the devil?' 'Alas! yes, my Colonel, saving your presence! He has filled my lungs with sharp knives!' 'Ah! the scoundrel,' roared Syreano, 'just you wait a minute and I will put him to flight.' And then, '*v'lan, v'lan*,' he began slashing the orderly's back with a horse-whip—both sideways and lengthwise—and scaring him enough to cure all his present and future attacks of pleurisy until finally Nicou beseeched him to desist, crying: 'Enough, my Colonel. I gratefully kiss your hands for I sense that he is leaving my body! He really is leaving me now, saving your presence! Now he has actually gone!' Ever since then our friend Nicou has been quite immune from all evil charms. He proudly exhibits his vaccination scars to any one who cares to look at them."

"Oh! Let it be my turn now. Perhaps it will do me good to be flogged! The devil I have in me is right next to the skin."

"Naughty, superstitious girl that you are!"

"Father! Superstition is becoming to me. A red ribbon in my hair, a ruby on my finger and a purple rose at my corsage. . . . Should it be necessary to wear gray to ward off ill-chance, then long live skepticism!"

"Well now, that is far less serious!"

"It is something similar to your mania for Roumanian traditions, my father."

"So much the better then! By the way, I had almost forgotten to tell you something. And I had come especially for that purpose. Dane is going to be married tomorrow. Prepare yourself for the occasion. We are to be god-father and godmother to the young couple."

"At last we will be rid of that good-for-nothing gardener of ours. He is a thief, drunkard and a scowling fellow. How many times already have you discharged him . . . only to take him back again later on!"

"What else was there for me to do, little girl? There is not his equal in the entire region for white-washing a wall in true Roumanian style. And, furthermore, I believe him to be devoted to us. He is able to protect the entire estate by himself. Let us take it for granted that he does steal an occasional liter of *tzouika*, but he prevents the other servants from drinking at least ten times that amount."

"Then it is a real phenix you are losing in having him leave us?"

"I will compensate for the loss."

"How?"

"By treating myself to the luxury of paying for a genuine wedding party according to ancient custom. Oh! I have gone to a great deal of trouble. I have gathered information from all the old grandsires and centenarians. I will strictly observe all the old customs. I am assuming great expenditures."

"Dear Father."

"As for you—all you will have to do will be to look

pretty, be agreeable and have a good time! It will help to make you forget about your melancholia."

"Let us hope that nothing goes wrong."

"Don't you worry about that. I have ordered something really Roumanian. And now, Rodica, I will leave you. Don't forget that it is for tomorrow. We will set forth at five o'clock in the morning for Stalpeni, in sleighs accompanied by music. I insist upon all the old customs being observed, absolutely all of them!"

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Tell me, my mirror, is it not true that all I have to do is to look pretty? That will be very easy for me. Something about me, I can't say what, exerts its influence before my very eyes. Who could resist loving me as I am? I adore my gracious, smiling red lips; my supple form pleases me in its dark robe. I love the rose brushing against my waist, the red ribbon flaming scarlet in my tresses, and it pleases me to cool my heart, when it is on the point of suffocating, with the stone glittering in my ring.

Eighteen years of age! I find the men most pleasing indeed, but the women are insignificant creatures. I captivate all the men but the women all detest me. And it is this fascination which I wield and this hatred which I inspire that is the secret cause of all my headaches, of my exasperated nerves and of my exuberant nature.

The city people talk about their nervous disorders. But here in the country it assumes far greater importance; I am looked upon as being bewitched!

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What impelled me to walk through the snow as far as the garden hot-house? Kneeling on the ground, Dane was caring for some pale orchid. I silently descended the three steps leading into the perfumed cage of glass and with the end of my light cane I clipped the plant from between the gardener's hands. Such vandalism as this caused him to raise his eyes, which were filled with indignation, but when they recognized who the vandal was

they became calm and mischievous again. He took his *cacioula* from off his head and twirled it around in his hands. Disdainfully I contemplated this man kneeling at my feet.

"It is very curious, Dane. You are about to be married and yet you haven't changed in the least."

"Oh, indeed I have, Conitza; I kiss your hand respectfully, but one is unable to see this change."

"So you went around from house to house hunting for a suitable wife with the flower stuck in your bonnet and a *plockka* of brandy by your side?"

"Last summer, Conitza, I went looking about along with a few young men of my own age. We were all very well received wherever we went and each one of us found what he desired."

"Didn't you know your fiancée before then?"

"All the same! I had already danced the *hora* with her and, as a sign of friendliness, she allowed me to take her belt as a souvenir."

"Ah, indeed! I know quite well that you are plentifully supplied with young girls' belts. Their little lace ribbons dangle from your waist. Is not your future wife jealous of you?"

"Indeed, Conitza, why should she be jealous? Mioara is rather proud of the fact."

"And you, Dane, does she really please you as much as all that—your little Mioara?"

"Certainly, Conitza! She has a fine dot consisting of a necklace of gold coins suspended around her throat. She is a real good girl and her equal can't be found for frying *coriba* and pickling cabbage. She knows how to weave her own cloth for the household. She does not talk a lot and she works steadily. Our existence together will be an enjoyable one."

"So let it be, Dane."

What was it that he surmised in my intonation? When I happened to turn around I caught sight of him through the panes of glass and saw that he was repeatedly making the sign of the cross as if he were seeking to chase away the evil-eye. And yet he followed my retreating form

with eyes which seemed to be adoring some intangible holy image.

But what does this poor clodhopper mean to me? Does a mere slave's glance count for anything? In loving Mioara he but debases himself even further. He is but the slave of a slave. But it all happened during the summer time. I was away at Constanza then. . . . I still laugh when I think about it. . . . The bathers, who were my equals, took great pains not to select any other girl to flirt with.

My head is hurting me.

Well now,—one would say that the midday angelus is ringing. . . . Can it be that my watch has stopped? No, it is still going and it is only eleven o'clock. It is the ringing of the chimes of heaven that I hear; it is the sound of the warning bells. . . .

Now it is all over with. . . . I have had my spell. Profound distress has taken the place of my careless laughter. My throat became contracted, a film was drawn down over my eyes and my old divan caught me as I swooned. It is quite accustomed to doing this. Then the devil began to shake and pulverize me. First came convulsions, feeble sobs and bursts of laughter which I smothered for fear that my father would overhear them. Then, prior to the final lachrymal bath, there came a fugitive rapturous trance during which Zmeou, the legendary goblin of the peasant-folk, appeared before me. He is without any well-defined form. He is deprived of the power of speech. He comes to me from out of the shadows to my right; as he moves along, his mouth—like that of some vampire's—sips the froth from my foaming lips and then he glides away to the left whispering as he goes. . . .

But it would be quite impossible for me to relate to any one the horrible things that Zmeou breathes into the depths of my ears.

II

January 16.

As yet it is barely daybreak. The caravan of sleighs has taken its place outside in the snow. Brrr! Fancy leaving my nice warm bed in order to marry two mere peasants!

Were it not for the fact that my father would be greatly annoyed, I would turn my face to the wall and sleep some more.

Through my double windows I can see the invited guests crowding around. Let it be understood for mere form that they are the invited guests of the godfather and of the godmother. The goddaughter's guests will have to shift for themselves. How very ridiculous our guests appear, awkwardly wrapped up in their heavy furs! It makes me shiver just to see them floundering about in all this hostile whiteness.

But come now, hop out of bed, you lazy girl!

Dane has the appearance of some wild animal all bundled up as he is in his *cojoc* of lamb's skin. Suddenly he pulls down his fur cap so that it even covers his neck and standing up like a real sleigh-driver he gathers up the reins, whips the horses and we begin sliding along like some fanciful dream through a flurry of snow.

Ten sleighs, packed with people, glide along in our wake accompanied by the jingling of bells!

"Come along now, gipsies," shouted my father to the *lautari*, "play and sing the nuptial repertoire; I demand that all the customs be observed . . ."

My father was highly exultant. And, observing one of the old customs, he distributed some silver pieces among the singing musicians.

As for me, I scowled sullenly beneath my astrakhan toque. On the traveling rug which kept me snug and warm I watched the hoar-frost sketch and efface—after the fashion of Penelope—a thousand different delicate embroideries. The gipsies kept up their warbling. Between the two walls of snow which sped past us, the highway seemed to be like some flossy-cotton wadding which deadened the sound of the horses' hoofs. Then our flotilla came out onto an immaculate lake which, being far too dazzling to reflect the heavens, seemed to admire itself in the skies above.

Gradually I could feel myself being influenced by all the poetic and glacial beauty about me. The horizon became less limited and the lake appeared to be a motion-

less ocean—a sort of sugar sea with frozen white caps. A brazen sun seemed to scowl icily over our heads. It appeared to illuminate only its own self and to wrap itself in its own rays in order to protect itself from the cold. Then all of a sudden a squall broke over us; the snowflakes swirled around us and the violins played merrily on. It was all like some unnatural, frozen springtime with benumbed nightingales and melting butterflies.

Fanciful dreams flourished within me while my flesh was slowly being frozen. There was a dull sensation of voluptuousness to my suffering. The fiddlers were benumbed by the cold and before very long I was oppressed by the silence about me. No sound came to my ears save the trill of the little aerial bells which caressed my mortal and marvelous fanciful visions.

Would I succeed in escaping from the perfect bevy of kisses which strove to seal forever my trembling eyelids?

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My lady companions then attempted to translate the charms of nature with appropriately beautiful words. As a result all the enchantment evaporated. All my attention was now centered on the otter-skin coat of Madame Foulgere, the tip of Mr. Vineano's weeping nose, Madame Trandafiresco's fur-lined pelisse and my father's gray moustaches, jutting forth from under his lowered hood.

My wonderful dream had been shattered. I had imagined myself to be Zina Consinzina, Queen of all the Fairies; now I had become, once more, mere Miss Mikesceano, the deputy's daughter, crowned no longer with a vaporous halo but only with an unbecoming *glouga*, and who, far from soaring about in a pure-white atmosphere on her gauze wings, now found her feet glued to her cloth boots by the severe cold. I fell from the fleecy clouds—indolently, like the slow-falling flakes of snow.

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Finally we approached Stalpeni. The houses bunched themselves in small groups; their thatch-top roofs assumed that stooped appearance of old housewives and they seemed

to be confiding to one another all the secrets of their inhabitants. The first and most dilapidated looking shack, a trifle to one side from the rest, was the lair of Ilinnka, the local sorceress. The most distant and the most substantial looking house was where the fiancée resided. From beneath the shed the parents of the future bride and groom came forward to meet us while the *lautari*, who were the first to have alighted, greeted us with their melodies.

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"Good day to you, Lelea Frossa!" called out my father in way of greeting. "Where is Mioara that I may present her to her godmother?"

"She will be here right away, Conachoula. But what a very distinguished young lady you have there! She is as beautiful as they are in fairy tales."

Lelea Frossa poured forth her praise in such a lamentable tone of voice that one would have thought that she wished to have me buried.

But after this the fiancée made her appearance.

"I kiss your hands, my good Godmother," she exclaimed.

She was a well developed and finely-set-up young girl. Her rounded bosom swelled the black velvet of her bolero jacket, which was bespangled with gold thread and broadly spaced over a *borangik* shirt waist, embroidered from top to bottom with many different-colored threads. The fringe of her shirt waist fell below the pleated folds of her pinafore of black cloth which, one of them falling in front and the other behind, formed a sort of skirt, which parted just below the waist line. She was wearing good, serviceable, high-laced shoes, which reached as high as the calves of her legs.

Just as she was I found a sort of charm to this peasant girl. It was the natural charm of a naïve and taciturn young maid, who appeared original because of her rustic, humble origin. Were her dark-skinned features enigmatic or cunningly deceitful? She did her utmost to dissimulate her true sentiments but she betrayed her very attempt at dissimulation. I noticed that her eyes, which at first had

been filled with frank admiration, had suddenly become manifestly spiteful.

But almost immediately she lowered over her cheeks the wisps of her *beteala*—a sort of nuptial gauze veil of fine silver thread which glistened on her black hair—and, as if in some vaporous cascade, she hid her face from view in its soft folds.

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Lelea Frossa presented us with an earthen pan and a truly marvelous hand towel, all embroidered with gold thread, saying:

"Here is some water, Godmother, with which to revive your benumbed hands and here is something to dry them with."

"But it is really not worth while to take the trouble to get out such a fine washing outfit as this," protested my father.

"But the custom demands it, Godfather. This linen cloth, which we have woven and ornamented ourselves, will feel very soft in your grasp and, afterwards, you will make a small contribution, which is also according to the custom."

Taken off his guard my father laughingly obeyed her instructions.

.

Triumphantly the procession made its entry into the church. The frescoes of saints, with which all the walls were colorfully embellished, greeted us with open arms. The icons held forth their hallowed hands, which had been tarnished by generations of kisses. So many faithful disciples had prostrated themselves in front of these images that their knees had worn grooves in the flagstones.

Dane and Mioara approached the *iconastasis* and they remained standing there in all their fine array; for Dane also was embroidered, adorned with gold braid and bespangled from head to foot with gold thread. In order to prove that love alone and not any selfish motive had

led them to the altar the carpet upon which they were standing had been strewn with coins.

The two swinging doors of the *iconostasis* were then thrown open. The pope—a noble, bearded old man—sprinkled us with holy water by means of a branch of sweet basil and began chanting nuptial prayers in that peculiar nasal tone of voice exacted by the rites. From the choir the deacons responded to his prayers.

He had the special young bride's crown placed on Mioara's brow. It had been tarnished through long use but I must admit that the peasant girl had the hieratic appearance of some Byzantine Empress beneath this simple wreath. Dane, who had been similarly crowned, appeared, to the contrary, more weighted down than ever. He held himself very stiff and scarcely dared to move for fear that he would dump his diadem of artificial flowers onto the floor.

Then, while still continuing his nasal liturgy, the pope, after the benediction, proceeded with the triple exchange of rings. With every second or third glance the newly married couple lifted their eyes toward each other, something which was quite contrary to all precepts.

"Bride, lower your eyes modestly when everybody is looking at you," came the severe command.

But, in reality, Mioara was far from being the center of general interest. It was quite evident that the vast majority of glances converged, along with the rising incense, directly in my direction. The men's glances resembled those of cowering dogs; the women's were like those of jealous cats.

And yet my attire was quite free from all ornamentation. What, then, inspired the men to contemplate my dress with such beatitude, and what induced the women to examine my simple, flowing dress of dark material with such disapprobation? Was it because this dress of mine was embellished by the gentle lines of my own body? Yes, no doubt. My radiant beauty was due entirely to my heavenly blue eyes and my sun-kissed strands of yellow hair. However, merely for the sake of modesty, I was certainly not going to shave my head and gouge my eyes out.

Quite to the contrary my smile revealed my fair dimples still more provokingly than before. I curled my silky gold curls around my ears as if they had been priceless ringlets, and my physical beauty shone through the meshes of my brown cloth dress. Yes, I purposely exposed my natural graces.

My father and I were seated alongside of our god-children and we were both given an enormous beribboned candle, bedecked with flowers like some greasy may-pole. The one I held was as tall as I was and certainly it was far heavier.

The newly-weds were holding each other by the hand. As a sign of their union the pope made them drink from the same goblet, turn in turn, on three separate occasions. Dane, although he had had plenty of experience in emptying filled tumblers of wine, swallowed the nuptial beverage the wrong way. He began coughing and his crown toppled over to one side but he managed to catch hold of it in time with a quick gesture which, however, caused the goblet to tremble in the pope's grasp and a few drops of the liquid spattered to the floor.

The guests commented upon this unexpected interlude in low tones.

But by this time the ceremony was nearly over with. The officiating priest began intoning the anthem, "*Isaie danse*," and he compelled the newly-weds and their godfather and godmother to begin dancing a lively, measured dance all around the altar while, in the meantime, the parents scattered grains of wheat beneath the feet of the dancers and candy drops among the lookers on.

And thus it was that there was one more married couple in the world.

Upon leaving the church Mioara was surrounded by a group of young people almost beneath the portal of the church. They accompanied her noisily to her own home. There they forced her to sit down and then proceeded to lift from her head the silver meshes of her *beteala*. Then they obliged her to don the silk *toulpan* which consecrated her a truly married woman. From then on she was no longer to have the right to go out bareheaded. They

formed in a circle around her and began singing the refrains of *desgovit*:

"Keep quiet, little bride, and don't cry any more,
For you will see your father and your mother again,
When strawberries grow on the apple tree boughs
And the pear trees blossom with violets."

It is customary for the bride to pretend to cry when listening to this song, but I feel certain that Mioara really did weep.

While walking along the snow-covered village street I saw the two newly-weds draw near to each other a little distance apart from the rest. They appeared to be tolerably affected. Dane, with his huge black hands of a laborer, was fingering the fringe of his broad silk waistband—this is the national *briou*. The only thing attractive about him was the black and white of his eyes, which were as brilliant as jet and as pure as porcelain. Mioara, with her inexpressive features, beneath which glowed an intimate flame, was waiting for him to make the advances and quite willing to accede to his wishes. Thus the groom swaggered along.

What clumsy, awkward simpletons they are! And how are they going to manage to steal a few kisses? She appears to be as flexible as a chump of wood and he is as enterprising as the stump of some tree. Their tanned faces seem to stain their light-colored garments; they look like two carrion crows on the snow.

And I am so purely radiant in my somber robe!

III

Like some lovely jewel re-entering its proper setting I closeted myself in the sumptuous guest chamber while waiting for the wedding feast to begin.

I relaxed on the rich carpet of various hues which covered the padding of the circular divan. I stretched myself luxuriously alongside of the monumental brick stove, whose

warmth even attained the windows where it effaced the beautiful frosty ferns—which are winter's coat-of-arms—traced on the panes of glass by the cold outside. For a time I examined the bunches of garlic which were hanging from the ceiling, the wreaths of red pimienta and the perfect stalactites of sausages. Then my shifting gaze fixed itself upon the luminous fireplace. I listened to what the crackling flames were saying and I responded to them.

"They appear awkward but they are quite sincere," said the flame. "Dane is united to Mioara by an ardent tenderness."

"Piteous idol. Shabby worshiper."

"Dane is robust and good. Mioara is gentle and kindly."

"But so mournful, so unresponsive, and quite devoid of spiritual feeling."

"Happy are they who are loved even in their mediocrity."

"Never shall I be loved in this manner."

"Never will you love any one in this manner."

"I will be loved because of the curly Indian corn wisps brushing my neck and the shadows under the fine flaxen strands of my lengthy lashes."

"You will not be admired because of your caustic and domineering character. Only the heart is capable of loving and as yet you have no heart. . . ."

This impertinence caused me to send a kick into the flame and it subsided. A gust of cold air swept down the chimney, swirling the smoke back into the chamber, and as I retreated before the dense cloud I could hear the drawn-out, melancholy, rhythmical chant coming from the courtyard:

"As soon as I beheld her, and almost at once,

She captivated me, so tender was her love.

And although she too is nothing but a maid

Still she is different from the rest, although I know not why."

(M. Eminesco.)

"Come along, Godmother, the feast is all set for you."

It was Mioara, who had discovered my hiding place, and she preceded me into the main reception room. Our

guests, the Roumanian noblemen, had already taken their places there. The newly-weds and the other peasants had been quartered in a sort of shed to the rear of the house. We were able to observe them without their seeing us. In this way each caste was quite at its ease. Our chairs, mine and my father's, had been stuffed in with two superb and elaborately embroidered cushions.

"That is an example of my handiwork," whispered the young bride. "Take them home with you as souvenirs."

We were also to keep our gold thread, hemstitched napkins as remembrances.

"Come now, *Tziganes!* Let the concert begin and play nothing but the most appropriate airs."

"We are at your orders, Conachoula!"

Following every timely air they played the *Tziganes* would give us a little jig, during which a collection would be taken up—that also was according to tradition—and I admired the good grace with which my father emptied his money pouch.

The people's jaws seemed to keep time with the rollicking music. After eating a small sandwich stuffed with caviar I found that I was filled up. I scarcely even tasted the inexhaustible supply of *ratza pe varza*, roast duck stuffed with cabbage, which had been pickled in water and which smelt terrible but tasted delicious to the palate.

While nibbling away I observed the other guests from my bench. They appeared to be plunging about in a perfect mire of sauce, in which chicken and turkey helplessly floated. The noblemen gorged themselves with the same enthusiasm as the peasants, whom I observed through the window.

It was a veritable epicurean procession that passed along the table: crisply broiled baby pigs; earthen pans filled with *moussaka*; white Braila cheese sprinkled with aromatic grains; boursouff cheese sewed up in a covering of lamb's skin; *baclava*, all sticks with honey and crushed nuts; meat tarts and ramekin cake. . . .

The guests crammed themselves with food and drank to excess. I, too, enlivened myself and became intoxicated with only one wine of Dragaschani—veritable devil's blood!

The bacchanal stories became more spicy and suggestive than ever. I, too, began relating a little tearful but unconvincing sentimental adventure.

After each of their verses the *Tziganes* would gulp down some *tzouika*—the brandy that incites to murder—and some *rakhiou*—the brandy that kills. They were singing now without interruption; plaintive ballads alternated with the *doine*; songs followed after songs like attended sweethearts after each other; the singers joined in the dancing and the *hora*, a moderately lively dance, was succeeded by the rollicking *sirba* which, in turn, soon degenerated into a wild, unrestrained and frenzied *saraband*.

M. Vineano, who was inspired to do as the others did, dragging the protesting Madame Giresco onto the floor. He tried his best to waltz her around but only succeeded in dumping over a platter. Then he was seized with an attack of hiccoughs and finally rendered . . . a profound homage over his partner's dress.

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Dane and his wife came and joined us in a few drinks. After having drained his glass my father deposited a few coins in their goblets. When my turn came to donate something I was so tipsy that instead of opening my purse I parted my lips and dipped my tongue into the empty glass Dane held out to me. Mioara tugged away at Dane's coat sleeve. She was defending her own happiness, which was but natural. But she exaggerated greatly in thinking that any one would pay her any attention—even her husband—when in my presence! Ah, no! Indeed not!

Suddenly I found myself unconsciously humming some light, giddy refrain translated from some old French popular song. They appeared to be very much surprised. I began laughing boisterously and, while tossing a *galbene* into his glass, I gazed at Dane as I instinctively sensed a woman should look at a man.

Utterly astounded the poor fellow was utterly incapable of turning his eyes away from mine. His wife, dreadfully mortified, gazed at him fixedly. Then, all of a sudden,

their eyes met and they took each other by the hand and asked permission to leave the room.

Well, then! Let them leave if they care to—this uncouth simpleton and this woman who still smells of the kitchen. If they imagine that it makes the slightest difference to me! Am I a mere brute fit only to satisfy the cravings of brutes?

My father then proposed a toast to the health of the newly married couple.

"And to ours!" added Vineano in an intoxicated tone of voice.

"And also to the health of those who have had too much to drink," I concluded.

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Swaying a trifle as we went all the guests followed after the young couple to where the wedding party was in full sway. The barn, all decorated with sheets and sprigs of fir-tree, served as a ballroom. I could hear some of the people present bemoaning their fate while others were shouting the usual litanies at the top of their lungs. The former insulted their parents while the latter called vile names at the godmother, the godfather and the noblemen present.

The latter, highly amused, passed around marvelous words and smiled graciously about them.

"You had better leave us now, Rodica!" said my father. "These peasants are all thoroughly drunk."

"Father! Do allow me to remain! I, too, am intoxicated!"

Saying this I stood up on my tiptoes, annoyed at not being able to see everything that was going on. Then suddenly two arms were passed around my waist and I was lifted high into the air like a mere feather—well above the heads of the other assistants.

"Now you will be able to see everything, Conitza!"

And it was quite true that I was able to see everything. Two couples were dancing vis-à-vis. The cavaliers were holding their partners closely to them and were fingering with their corsage. They were laughing from sensuality, thinking that it was from pure pleasure.

But who was it who had lifted me up so that I was able to see all this lewd dancing? It was that rounder Dane, who continued to mumble respectful remarks in my ear which were completely offset by the audacity of the way he was holding me.

My eyes were confused by the dancing *tzarani*. My ears were ringing with all these coarse expressions, my head was throbbing and I struggled cunningly in his firm grasp, hoping to be held all the closer.

"Dane, I tell you to leave me alone! You are soiling my dress with your filthy hands."

Then the idiot let me down to the floor and, ashamed of himself, he hurriedly departed. The bride, too, had disappeared.

How insipid are all these people! I literally suffocated from rage and disgust.

"Father, I am going outside. One can't breathe in here."

"Run along, young lady. It is wiser for you to leave."

.

Yes, I really was suffocating. I roamed about carelessly. In one of the sheds I came across the *débris* of the victuals we had had. Wolf-hounds had jumped up on the table and were ravenously devouring the remains. They, too, in turn, were having their feast.

The floor of the shed was littered with little handkerchiefs, lace ribbons, *beteala* and orange blossoms—all of which constituted the *débris* of a matrimonial orgy.

But what was it that I saw in one of the corners? It was Mioara and Dane. They were tenderly embracing each other, utterly forgetful of everything, yes, of everything! Even forgetful of my own existence!

They were not saying anything to each other. He contented himself in looking at her. She, on the other hand, had lowered her gaze. Then he attempted to draw her against his chest but she resisted. He wanted to embrace her but she, poutingly, pushed him away from her.

"Mioara," he said, far from being discouraged, "you are wearing a very pretty shirt waist."

Saying this he began fingering with it.

"Dane, keep your hands away!"

"But you are my wife, Mioara!"

"Well, and what of it?"

"Then kiss me."

"Just you count on it!"

But, in spite of this, she was going to give in to him, but only just enough to temper his advances. I burst out laughing at them. It was a veritable cascade of laughter, a hail storm of pearls whose music patter I listened to as it fell harmoniously, stinging this peasant girl's sad heart.

Frightened and deeply pained Mioara made her escape. And it was quite in vain that Dane attempted to prevent her leaving by making light of my intrusion.

.
"Dane!" I called to him.

"I am at your orders, Conitza."

"Your wife is really very pretty."

"It is very kind of you to say so, Conitza, but beauty does not endure. She is also serious minded and industrious. In addition she has some prospects in view from her grandmother's side."

"Do you love her?"

"How could I do otherwise than love her, Conitza? God has united us and the pope said that we never more should part."

"And how about us, Dane? Are you glad to be leaving us?"

"Indeed not, Conitza! Your garden for me is a paradise I have lost. I cultivated its earth with all the love the earth merits and I tenderly cared for the flowers with all the ardor flowers inspire me with."

"Didn't you ever pluck any of them to give to Mioara?"

"Never, Conitza; I swear it to you! May the devil take those who have made you believe that I ever robbed Conou Mikesceano. They have all lied to you!"

"Ha, ha! What luck my father has!"

"May happiness overtake him. I bemoan my master as if I were losing my own father. And, by gad, whenever

the Conachou gave vent to his anger I did not miss any of the thrashings he meted out. I shall miss them as if they were my daily bread."

"And how about me, Dane, will you miss me, too?"

Taken off his guard Dane considered the matter for a moment while fingering with his cap.

"I miss your garden, Conitza, filled with all its marvelous things. How jealous I am going to be of all those who will gather its flowers—the flowers I cared for and protected with my dog-paws and wolf-teeth."

"Yes, I understand, Dane! You really adore the flowers. But I, Rodica Mikesceano, are you going to miss seeing me?"

"I beg your pardon, Conitza, but you have placed your elbow on the table and your dress has been spotted by goose grease."

He was doing his utmost to find some excuse for running away from me.

"You must come back and see us, Dane!" I insisted, with such a complex inflection of the voice that I, myself, was unable to say if it was an invitation, a rebuke or a prayer.

"I will return, Conitza," he stuttered in a hoarse tone, "if the wife is willing."

Fancy that! If his wife is willing!

I assumed a distant, haughty air, which put an end to the discussion. Then I held my hand out for him to kiss.

Now it was an unexpected, frenzied, burning kiss that I felt. It enflamed my flesh, electrified my nerves and filled my heart with an acrid, animal-like odor of fresh earth and base servitude.

.
I swooned and fell I knew not where. It happened to be into his arms. I sighed and said:

"Carry me into the guest's chamber."

Instantaneous visions were passing confusedly before my half-closed eyes. I was half dreaming and only partially alive. I could hear Zmeou's low murmur coming from the depths of my dream or from the depths of my heart:

"She is different from the rest although I know not why!"

I seemed to be as heavy to carry as some transgression, so heavy, indeed, that my carrier was obliged to hold me more firmly than before.

Then—did I give it or did I receive it?—I felt in the obscurity the secret confession of a kiss upon my lips. I also remember that an imploring woman surprised this secret. . . .

“Leave her alone, Dane! . . .” But the man had only pushed the woman away from him.

.

When I regained consciousness I was lying on the divan near the large stove, and my father was there by my side rubbing my hands.

“Are you feeling better now?” he inquired.

“Yes, Father.”

Then he took leave of me in order to preside over some function or other.

Scattered on the floor beside me I saw my broken ring, my faded rosebud and my crumpled ribbon. I picked everything up and donned them again. I buttoned up my dress, which I had torn open with my own hands, and I let my finger nails grate along my silk scarf. Ah! what a delight! I found that one of the silk fringes was missing.

But the chamber was as hot as a sweating room. The women guests had made themselves as comfortable as they could. Here and there sprawled a corset bearing a Parisian label or a jacket of Viennese cut. The atmosphere was laden with the odor of perspiring bodies and my benevolent nurses were commenting upon my fit of fainting. It was too much like some old maid's sewing circle and I lost no time in making my escape.

.

The dancing, shouting, and the squeaking of the violins were still going on in the barn. I passed along quite indifferent to it all and skirted the side of the shed. I could overhear a whispered conversation going on. I held my breath and listened intently. I did my best to understand what was being said.

"I beg you to give that to me," said a woman's plaintive voice.

"Give you what?" replied the man evasively.

"That cursed bit of silk fringe."

"If you insist upon it."

That was all. Then came the sound of hurrying feet and Mioara came running out of the shed. She passed alongside of me without noticing my presence. Her eyes, like those of some suffering virgin's, transfigured her dark features. How, indeed, could one refrain from loving this brooding and anguished peasant girl who was the very incarnation of the most tender and natural expression of love?

She did not catch sight of me but I could see her running off over the snow. She was running straight ahead of her, like some sleep walker.

And then I was filled with the desire to know where she was bound for. With my dainty slipper I picked out the tracks she left behind her in the snow.

IV

Where could Mioara be running to like this through the snow, already so very far ahead of me? The poetic beauty of the wintry scene did not detain her in the least. She was rushing on, like some hallucinated person, towards happiness or sorrow.

"Mioara! Mioara!" I called out to her as I ran. What, indeed, if I should sink down unobserved in this damp mantle of snow! "Mioara! Mioara! Wait for me! Where are you bound for?" Mioara trembled, stopped and looked around.

"My godmother, I am going to see Ilinnka the sorceress. Now that I am married I should like to know what my future holds in store for me."

"Oh! But I will accompany you then! I, too, have dealings with sorcerers!"

Mioara at first seemed to be suspicious but then she changed her mind and appeared to be sincerely flattered.

"I am going along with you, Mioara!" I repeated.

"May it bring you good fortune, lovely Godmother."

We found Ilinnka inside her obscure shack. The chimney-piece served as a crude couch for her. She was seated there with her legs crossed under her in true Turkish fashion. Her pipe was in her mouth and her gaze seemed to be lost in profound reverie. Was she conversing with the spirits? Was she slowly boiling some strange filter? It was all a deep mystery. From time to time she would poke the burning fire which gently warmed her narrow ledge.

"Ilinnka!"

As soon as she caught sight of us the pythoness clambered down from her perch, lifting her skirts as she passed close to the fire. Then she began embracing my hands and feet and poured forth a stream of flattering remarks in which the following refrain was constantly repeated:

"If the Coconitza has any wornout belongings to give me I will be most happy to wear them in her honor."

"Alas! Ilinnka! I neglected to bring my old things along with me to the wedding party. But I have a shiny gold piece here if . . .

The old gipsy made a wry face, saying:

"No money, Coconitza! I don't know how to calculate. Give me any old trifle, no matter what. Your little black toque for instance. You won't miss it very much."

"Indeed not! Aren't you ashamed of yourself to ask me for my astrakhan cap?"

"If you will only give me that, Coconitza, I will tell you some things concerning your lover that will astound you."

"I have no lover. Just tell me my fortune. I will give you my silk scarf."

"May God bless you, precious child of your father. May all the days of your long life be woven with gold and silver."

"I won't take money either, Ilinnka! It is happiness I desire; and love. . . ."

These last words had their effect. As if to tend the fire, Mioara stooped over, trying to conceal her sorrow, but the firelight revealed her tense, pained expression.

"Tell Mioara's fortune first," I said, carefully observing all the gestures she made.

The young bride squatted on an old straw mat alongside of the gipsy. Her eyes seemed to become more sorrowful than ever.

"Ilinnka," she said, "read my future for me in the grains of Indian wheat. I want to know if . . ."

She hesitated to continue. Then, her voice trembling with suppressed sobs, she murmured:

"Ilinnka, I want to know if happiness watches over my little home or else if misfortune lies in wait for me. The devil has stolen everything from me and to cajole me he has replaced the things I love by false images. Tell me if Dane is really Dane and if he is not Necouratou in disguise. And if it should be that he is bewitched then I implore of you, Ilinnka, to conjure the evil spell."

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Seated in front of her low, round table and never once taking the pipe out of her mouth, the sorceress set about to question the evil spirit, the grains of Indian wheat which she had taken from her pocket and all the crafty, goblin spirits.

"Forty-one grains . . . forty-one little brothers; how yellow and round you have remained. Now you are to fathom what occupies Dane's thoughts. If he thinks of Mioara on Tuesday night, then pick out Tuesday night by indicating the number nineteen. If he is not bewitched, my little grains, then count as far as number four and God will cause you to multiply and He will make all the Indian wheat in the world flourish. If my hand should stop at fifteen, indicating the fatal blond woman, then say farewell to Dane, give him up for lost, Mioara, and look about for some one else. And if I stop at number seven it will be a warning of impending death."

Then, continuing to prophesy, she arranged her little grains on the table in small piles, which she counted out in a low voice. Rightly enough, the number nineteen came up, but neither the fifteen nor the four appeared. For the last question Ilinnka mumbled some cabalistic terms after which she began counting out loud: "One, two, three, four, five, six . . ."

As true as I am alive I saw the seventh and fatal grain cleverly flipped into the aperture of her loose-fitting blouse.

"Mioara," prophesied Ilinnka, "you are the apple of Dane's eye. But he is bewitched by a clear stream which does not flow in your village; by a blue-hued flower which does not grow on your mountain slopes and by a tongue of flame which does not come from the sun but from hell. Dane has conserved his own features but his heart has been stolen."

"Then he dreams of another! He! He!"

"We will free him from the evil spell."

"He dreams of another!"

"He won't think of her much longer."

Utterly exhausted, Mioara sighed: "Will I die before very long?"

"Who has spoken to you of death? It is your wedding day; your husband will tenderly embrace you. Your beautiful *beteala* will fall from you like some shimmering river of silver. Never will you have been more loved than now."

Then the old witch drew a long puff from her pipe and continued:

"And from this night on you will have no further sorrows. Dane will be freed from the evil charm and he will love you until the end."

Then Ilinnka turned in my direction and prepared to foretell my future.

Suddenly I felt myself rudely shaken by some mysterious force. The witch jumped away from me, utterly terrified. She covered her eyes with her hands and exclaimed:

"Ah! What a terrible thing I just saw!"

"Well, and what was it that you saw?"

"I can't tell you, I can't tell you!"

"Tell me! I demand it!"

"No, no; it's too horrible. . . ."

"Death?"

"I can't tell you."

"I wager that it was the devil you caught sight of!"

"Yes, Coconitza, that was what I saw. Beyond a doubt I really beheld the devil!"

Much to the surprise of the two women I burst out laughing. Then Ilincka set about to conjure the evil spirit. But before she had entirely finished with her mysterious incantations we were all surprised by the sound of violins rapidly approaching the shack. The wedding party had discovered our traces and pell-mell the peasants and the noblemen began crowding into the room. Quickly the sorceress hid from sight all her magic preparations.

"Hurry up and deliver me of the evil spirit," I whispered to her.

But the boisterous crowd interrupted us by shouting the refrain of their popular song. Then my father began questioning the old witch and I did not find the opportunity of speaking with her again until we were on the point of leaving. Then I asked once more to be delivered of the evil charm but she only replied:

"It is quite impossible to do so now. But"—and she lowered her voice even more—"the Cocoana can very well free herself of the evil charm all by herself. All she will have to do will be to dance above some grave at midnight and sing the song of the *briou*."

"Good. Here is my scarf for you."

"Thank you, Coconitza. And here is my *briou*."

All the way back I demanded Dane's entire attention. I can't remember what I said or what he replied. Indeed, I was not thinking of him at all. I was only concerned with myself. I was trying out my powers of seduction. I was making sure that my laughter triumphed over the other woman's tears.

The cold air cleared Dane's thoughts and he allowed his soul to freely express itself. I remember that he spoke with greater wisdom than I would have given him credit for. His voice stirred me to the very depths of my being. I was even able to fathom the thoughts he refrained from uttering; the tender words he was reserving for his wife. I considered that this privilege was far too good for her.

The peasant man was enthusing. I leaned heavily on his strong shoulder and trembled at the thought that I was fully as weak as some little country girl. I was tempted

to make myself desired by this man. I would have given in to him if I had only known how to go about it.

But I continued to egg him on only to rebuke and then tempt him anew. It pleased me greatly to think of the other woman's anxiety and of what she imagined we were saying as we walked along together, half concealed by the lengthening shadows of evening.

.

We were about to leave the young couple to themselves and begin our drive homeward under the light of the moon. Every one was busy assembling his belongings. After having hitched the horses to our sleighs Dane disappeared from view. I had decided to abandon him to his lowly fate.

Our horses were impatiently pawing the snow when, all of a sudden, wild shouts dominated the general noise and confusion.

There was a moment of surprised silence and then came a desperate appeal:

"Vail! Vail! Help! Come quickly!"

I jumped down from the sleigh and ran along with the others, burning with a desire to see what had happened. Had a fire broken out somewhere in the house? Were wolves attacking the stables? Or else were we only to see some further traditional rite carried out by my father's orders? Perhaps the bride's chemise, which, according to custom, was to be exhibited to the guests, had been stolen by one of the intoxicated revelers. . . .

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No. The celebration was over with.

I was carried along with the crowd as far as the bridal chamber.

Mioara's half-naked form was lying across a small stool. Her head and shoulders were resting on the low table in front of her. She had the appearance of a little, sleeping child. Was she crying to herself? Had she fainted?

Her robust arms were crossed in front of her. Her disordered hair hung down over her face and the silver folds of her *beteala* glistened against her dark skin. She ap-

peared almost beautiful like this. But what did such an exhibition signify? Could it be that she, too, had fits the way I have?

Could it be that this, too, was but one of the traditional customs? What was that wooden tub, such as is used by the peasants to wash their clothes in, doing there by her side?

Heavens! The tub was filled full of water and her head was completely submerged! She ran the risk of being drowned! Come, enough of such play! Hurry up and pull her out!

But it was all too late now!

The other guests were no longer paying her any attention at all. The women were doing their best to comfort Lelea Frossa. Dane was weeping bitterly, sustained by his own and my father. From time to time he uttered a veritable death howl.

.
Ah! The poor creature! She was not sleeping. It was not a mere play. She had really committed suicide!

Despite her disrespectful attitude she had become a despotic queen. She was the mistress of the situation. Never will I be able to surpass or even equal this woman's simplicity, pure passionate love and mysterious supremacy.

It was then that I recalled to mind all that the old sorceress had prophesied.

Indeed, the evil charm had been broken. Nothing seemed to exist for Dane except the poor, dead body of his little bride. Every one else had been abolished. Even I no longer existed for him.

Indeed, never will I love, suffer and expire as she had done. Never will I be able to impose such suffering on any man.

Suddenly Dane lifted his wife's body up in his arms with savage love and I caught sight of her blue, terribly swollen features. Never will any arm grasp my form in such a manner.

Nor will I ever have the terrifying beauty of that pitiless corpse that a living man embraced with such frantic fervor.

No, never will I wield the charm of this candid little bride, drowned in her own bitter tears. Never will my heart be worthy of beating with such fidelity, such utter resignation, such love, innocence and pride as had the heart of this little peasant girl.

It was for this reason that I burst out screaming with terror, rage and utter helplessness. Others thought that I cried from pity. But I continued to scream until I could no longer hear what was going on about me. Then everything suddenly went blank and I lost consciousness.

HERE LIES MIOARA . . .

January 20.

Three days have already elapsed. We were obliged to postpone our departure in order to attend the burial. As for me, I did not go at all. I was wildly delirious. I had abandoned all hope of being able to forget my responsibility in this drama and that I had pushed this tender love into eternity with my own hands.

I abandoned all hope of being able to forget the bride's ghostly apparition and the poor, weeping widower; I abandoned all hope of forgetting about these humble people and of being able to assume my natural dignity.

Wherever I passed I could hear people say:

"There goes the bewitched creature; the woman who is possessed of the devil. . . ."

And perhaps what they said was quite true.

For last night, toward midnight, I suddenly found myself way up there in the little cemetery, standing on the poor, humble grave. . . . I suddenly found myself stamping on the freshly-turned earth, dancing wildly about on it, chuckling with satanic glee and shouting to the four corners of the earth:

"It serves you right, you horrible, decaying corpse!"

Yes, I found myself doing all this. I was extenuated and gasping for breath and yet I somehow found the strength to regain control of myself and make the sign of the cross. Then, prostrating myself in the dust I had just blasphemed—in that miraculous dust under my feet—I very humbly kissed the fine earth.

All that precedes happened very long ago.

Is it really true that I was as wicked as all that? Did they really suffer and did they really die because of me?

Forgive me, O you vindictive dead. My expiation has endured already only too long.

At that morbid epoch I was still a young maiden, infinitely blond, strange and eccentric.

Since then, under the lash of remorse, I have become . . .

But it is far too horrible! I am unable to confess what I have become. . . .

THE EMPEROR'S DAUGHTER

By M. JORGA

SHE was the Emperor's daughter and the most beautiful creature in the world. He had seen others at his neighbors' courts and he himself had had a princess for his wife who was as lovely as the radiance of day. Even now his sorrow was softened by the memory of that bright smile illuminating the lips of the very beautiful woman who had been his mother. But all this could not compare with the loveliness of this imperial young maiden.

Consequently it seemed to him that there was nothing which God had given to mankind that was quite worthy enough to suitably honor such exceptional beauty as this. He wanted to find something far better and he sought for it among his countless treasures. He therefore conceived a new world for her from which all men were forever banished excepting those who were attached to their queen's service. Gold trees were planted and the breezes would gently stir their leaves of the purest silver; rubies enhanced the beautiful color of the roses and the blue of the lilacs appeared against a background of emeralds and sapphires. But surrounding all this was a high, brutal wall of steel. An enormous granite tower protected the entrance, and the ferocious guardian on watch before the unique passageway was a terrible dragon all covered with scales which were as hard as diamonds.

Far, far away from this place was an Emperor's son who was sad and lonely. All his offers of marriage had been refused as a result of an ambition which had other and more pretentious plans in mind. But when they told him about the enchanted palace it seemed to him that some instinct was aroused deep in his heart. Then it was that he made an invulnerable resolution. He must win for himself at any cost this one and only bride.

He therefore told his father that he was leaving on a

very long journey and that the difficulties he would have to overcome were so great that he considered it necessary to take along with him all the finest and most precious things in his father's palace, together with the bravest among his courtesans. Quite a little army, magnificent in its array, was on the point of setting forth when the young Prince suddenly realized that he had overlooked that special detail which is generally forgotten in all sublime dreams and deep passions; he did not know what road he was to take!

"Go and ask Saint Mercredi to tell you the way," advised his old nurse.

It was not an easy matter, I assure you, for him to find her, but once in her presence the kindly and saintly woman was touched by the ardor and the purity of his desire. "Here, then, is the road you are to follow," and saying this, she showed him its entire length and the circuitous paths he would have to take.

"You must choose for steed the horse that is as quick as thought. He is waiting for you in your father's stables, but take good care that you do not pause in the Valley of Regret."

Thus the youthful Prince set forth, but he spurred on his marvelous steed so fast that he greatly out-distanced his own followers. After having overcome a great many difficulties, he found himself quite alone one fine morning in front of a garden and a chateau which were exactly like his own. Not the slightest detail was lacking. There were the same doors, the same façades, the same towers and he was even able to recognize the same old trees that had once soothed him as a child with the delightfully gentle rustling of their leaves. How could he resist the impulse to examine more carefully this old homestead which, it seemed to him, he had never before forsaken? He therefore got down from his horse, but no sooner had he done so than he was overcome by an immense longing for all the many things he had left behind him. A mournful voice began speaking to him from the branches of one of the old trees. This voice told him how very sad his old father was at having been left all alone. That he had,

indeed, fallen very seriously ill; so very ill, in fact, that he might expire. Hearing this, the young Prince came to a sorrowful resolution and returned to his home.

However, he found that everything was calm, cheerful and well, and that the old Emperor was awaiting his daughter-in-law. It was quite evident that an evil charm had been wrought. The old nurse gently petted her young pupil and said to him: "Don't seek Saint Mercredi's assistance again; she will no longer be willing to give you her advice. But Saint Vendredi is aware of the situation, so go and confide your desire to her."

Having finally found her, very far away from there, the young Prince succeeded in winning an award: it was a flower of the fields which he was to throw towards the mysterious window of the carefully guarded chateau, and also this word of warning: "My son, be careful not to tarry in the Valley of Despair."

With his eyes firmly closed, the enthusiastic horseman rode through the valley which had so affected him previously. But one night when he was exhausted by the long journey he had made, he found himself in the midst of a thick, black wood whose heavy shade invited him to refresh himself there. But no sooner had he alighted than he began thinking about all the great difficulties he had been obliged to overcome and endure, the poignant uncertainty of what was still in store for him, and the alarming danger awaiting him at the end of his journey. Then, perched on the somber branch of a tree, a jet-black raven began saying to him, "Young Prince, do not go there, for you will certainly never return." Terrified, the young Prince directed his steed towards home.

When he saw the pitying smiles of those about him, is it necessary to say to what an extent he regretted that instant of uncertainty which had once again led him to regain his solitary home alongside of the old Emperor? This time they made him the present of a strange bird which he was to set free under the same mysterious window when he should see a teardrop fall from the clear eyes of the beautiful Princess and also the precious advice not to allow himself to be detained by anything.

With his ears covered over, he was able to pass through the black forest, which now had no further power over him, and we now find him standing in front of the dragon.

He had been told that the armor of the monster ended just above the long, bristling neck. Resolutely he thrust his lance into this vulnerable spot. The foam-covered head of the beast writhed about the gory steel lance and then the young Prince, with desperate haste, piled stone upon stone until he finally succeeded in choking and crushing all life out of the dragon. As if by enchantment, the seven charmed locks immediately opened of their own accord and he found himself in the wonderful garden of gold, silver and precious stones.

However, during the time it had taken him to reach his goal, certain changes had taken place in this world which had been conceived with the idea that it would never alter.

With the coming of another springtime, the young maiden had sensed—even through the walls of steel—the wonderful charm floating down from the soft blue skies. In this marvelous garden there were neither perfume nor song and it even seemed that there was something else lacking besides all this. Then it was that she said to her faithful servants: "All this is very beautiful indeed, but I am mortally disconsolate and I am afraid that it will kill me. Ah! If only the window that gives onto the world I have left behind me could be thrown wide open!" Indeed, her sadness was slowly killing her. Seeing this, her servants, who loved her and were devoted to her, disregarded all the terrible orders that had been given to them and threw open the window.

It was astonishing to see how the Princess seemed to come back to life again. . . . From far and near voices reached her ear along with the many sweet perfumes of the earth; those coming from the trees in full bloom and those arising from the old forest. She was surrounded and intoxicated by them all. As if she were in a dream she was only able to exclaim, "Thank you!" But in spite of all this she was still waiting for something else besides.

Now just at this time a strong wind seemed to rattle

the shutters. Whistling, it brushed on into the rich room made entirely of gold. The young maiden was quite frightened. But, in truth, it was not the wind that entered but the winged-spirit of the bold mountain which had also been stirred by passion and which had forsaken its lofty lair.

He was master of all the forces in the earth, in the waters and in the heavens. Even at night he clothed himself in the radiance of day. Standing upright in the canopy of heaven, he directed a clear, cold ray of light against the window and, of her own accord, the Princess made her way towards him. Then it was that she beheld a handsome young man, all covered with flaming waves of pure gold, who was advancing towards her.

"Beautiful maiden, are you ready to accept my love?"

"Nenui," she replied. "Nenui. Even in the night I sense in your presence a sun that blinds me! Go your way! You are handsome, but nevertheless you must depart!"

He withdrew, but for a long while the ray of light lingered there on the window-sill, accompanying the Princess in her dreams. Her dreams were mortal ones, as was her very soul. But with the advent of night the rain began to beat down on the garden and once again the Spirit appeared, drawn there by the same inextinguishable passion. Crowned with green seaweed, he was holding a coral scepter in his hand. He said to her:

"As you are afraid of the sun, I now bring to you the refreshing coolness of the ocean waves and there is a palace of red coral waiting there for you. Come!"

"You must leave me, although you are indeed most handsome. Leave me, for I am chilled."

"I won't depart without at least learning what your desire may be."

"It is a noble and yet a very modest one: you must remain as handsome as you are but be a mortal like me."

"God created me immortal and greater than all other men."

"I only desire to have one man, and one who is not immortal."

"That man shall be given to you."

No sooner had he said this than a rainbow showered its colors over the chateau and the garden and bathed the beautiful maiden in its many hues. Now it so happened that the Emperor's youthful and vigorous son had triumphantly entered the garden that very morning.

He paused beneath the open window. It seemed to him that the distance still to be bridged was very great and fraught with difficulties, so polished was the high granite wall rising before him. But, having remembered about the flower he carried, he threw it up to the white ledge of the open window.

At that moment the Princess was arranging a crown made of rubies, sapphires and emeralds. The flower fell lightly against her arm. For a long time she carefully contemplated this poor little flower of the fields. The little flower had a very sweet perfume. Then the Princess uttered a long cry which caused the silver walls—which had never before seen anything but endless boredom and loneliness—to vibrate joyfully. With a light spring she hastened to the window and caught sight of the young Prince who had come to her from the outside world—her own natural world. She gazed at him and smiled. He did not speak to her, but his eyes pleaded with her to come down and join him. But how was she to descend? The high walls of polished white silver discouraged her hope of ever attaining the spot where she was so impatiently awaited. And then a teardrop fell from her beautiful, clear eyes.

Seeing this the Prince released the bird from his grasp, and as it soared upward it grew in size. When it attained the window ledge it was so large that one of its wings was capable of supporting the weight of a human passenger.

As if everything had been carefully arranged a long time in advance, the young maiden took her place on the extended wing, which was quite as large as a sheet. In this manner she descended to the ground and then the two lovers jumped on the marvelous steed and made their escape.

But the Emperor and father of the Princess had been

informed of what was taking place in the garden of gold trees, silver leaves and flowers of precious stones. He, too, possessed a winged steed in his stables whose stride was gifted with a magic charm. He jumped into the saddle and set forth to wreak his vengeance on all those who had infringed upon his imperial commands.

The elopers suddenly felt a hot breath burning them from behind. It was the father's terrible wrath. The young Prince was quite overcome by terror.

"How are we going to escape?" he inquired of his companion. "You know what your father is capable of doing under the furious influence of his ungovernable wrath."

"We must speed on as fast as the wind."

But a few minutes later they were strangled by the burning breath which enveloped them both.

"How are we to continue our mad flight?" he asked chokingly.

"We must fly like a bolt of lightning."

There came an instant of temporary relief in the cool air surrounding them, but once again the fiery breath overtook the guilty lovers.

"How are we going to escape this time?" he pleaded. "How?"

"We will have to fly as fast as thought."

Their steed understood the order given him and the clouds which were banked up on the road he followed were pierced in the twinkling of an eye as he rushed on to the very limits of the distant horizon.

This time the Emperor had abandoned the pursuit. The very earth had ceased to try to punish them. But the power of heaven had been offended and another ire was about to fall on them from the stars above.

The Spirit of Light had presented himself before the Great Eternal. "Father Almighty, preserve me from immortality," he pleaded.

"You are therefore determined to become a man?"

"Nothing but a man. Accord me the grace of being nothing more than a mere mortal."

"But do you not know that man is nothing more than poor foam that quickly evaporates, the mere gleam of a

shooting star that is extinguished as it falls or the glory of a thought that is soon forgotten for all time?"

"Nevertheless, I want to become a mere man."

By divine grace he was therefore shorn of his immortality. Burning with pride at being at last an equal of the maiden he so loved, he cast a luminous glance toward the earth.

He caught sight of the two lovers tenderly embraced.

Then a tear of light fell from his eyes, but it did not calm the terrible sorrow of this radiant Spirit. But a penalty was about to be imposed. To compensate for the sacrifice of his immortality, the maiden who had demanded this of him would have to offer up her own life. But she alone and not the youthful lover of this tale.

But how were they to be separated? He recalled to mind the various desires of women, who are but grown-up children, and a shining jewel fell from the sky. Then, forgetful of all the things she had once possessed and which had formerly seemed to weight her down, the Princess broke away from her lover's embrace in order to seize it. But as she did so an immense boulder, as large as a fortress and as heavy as all the lead in the world, fell upon her frail form and crushed her.

In despair the young Prince lamented over this huge boulder. For three days and three nights he wept without ceasing. Then he slowly made his way into the Valley of Regret. He has been dead now for many long centuries. . . .

BORTZOFFIAN PHILOSOPHY

By MAXIM GORKI

TIMOFER BORTZOFF, shepherd of the village of Vychenka, was a man of parts and his equal was not met every day. He had mysterious powers, he could peer at least a little way into the future and he had gifts permitting him to care not only for sheep, horses and cattle, but also to protect his fellow beings. He was the village judge, and to his discretion were confided family affairs of every kind. As a master weaver of straw and cane, he made all sorts of little boxes, frames, cigarette cases and other things. He ornamented his straw products with coverings of brightly colored paper.

The important moujiks about spoke of him with the deepest respect. "He is a moujik of the greatest intelligence," they averred. "For us he is a wise counselor. We consider him our minister." The children and young folk regarded him with awe and a little dread. They called him "Uncle Tim."

Bortzoff was generally in high esteem in the village on account of his impartiality, his exact sense of justice, his intelligence and his sobriety. First to arrive at every village meeting, he was the last to address the assembly. He never ventured an opinion or a counsel until he had carefully listened to every view expressed. When still only a simple assistant to the chief shepherd, an ox had one day buried a horn in his thigh. Again, during the days of his youthful military service some of his ribs got broken. On account of these injuries, he had a queer way of balancing his athletic frame as he walked. At every step, he seemed about to stretch himself on the ground on his right side, as if to place his ear against the soil to hear something; but then he appeared to be repelled magnetically by the earth, as if it did not wish to answer him.

He was strong, vigorous, of deeply bronzed complexion

and sixty years of age. He had never lost one of his white teeth. Reddish locks waved forth from his thick mop of hair. His hair seemed to grow redder, instead of whitening. His hair was so thick that he could do without a cap both in summer and winter.

When he talked to his animals he used a loud, harsh voice. When speaking with men, he employed slow and gentle tones, so that they might listen with the fullest attention. He was a true philosopher. As he occupied himself with selling his little trinkets he saw everything and reflected deeply. Often from morning to night he could be found in his field, which lay on a little hillside in the shade of a big birch tree. Or he might be busy on the edge of a grove, scolding the younger shepherds and continually raking up the straw from the piles near by.

He asked himself, sometimes, "Why do people argue and dispute?" And he readily found the answer to his self-put question. "It is because people are taught things. As soon as the alphabet was invented, arguments and disputes began between books, laws and people. There you are! Suppose somebody gives me a written order. Well, I don't understand it, for I can't read. Or suppose somebody is an animal doctor, or what is called a veterinary. Well, I know something of this business myself, but I can't talk to that animal doctor! Why? Well, it is because he is instructed and I am not. Yes, indeed. There you are!"

I listened to him and I observed him. His long, sharp nose was lost in the depths of his reddish beard, from which peeped out his brilliant, crafty green eyes. Those eyes were regular toads' eyes. His mouth was invisible. When he talked something could be seen stirring within his beard, and the cold, bright row of his teeth was perceptible. To me he seemed a curious foreigner, like a German. He was like a station master, or one of those fellows who wear uniforms and have a lot of authority. When he was abusive and rough I understood him very well; but when he used correct language, I—between you and me, I couldn't understand him at all. He seemed from one land and I from another, and, of course, we couldn't comprehend each other. It's just like that with the priest. When he talks

loud and makes prayers in the church, you can't understand him, either. In church, it's like being in a dream. You want to understand, but how can you? And it's the same thing over again with the schoolmaster. All the children get tired of the school, and all they learn is to keep getting tired. What a strange century we live in! It's lucky that the children forget, when they grow up, everything that people tried to teach them. If it weren't for that, even the moujiks would wind up by not being able to understand each other. Don't you see? Instruction and learning are the roots of all the evil in the world.

Sometimes I tried to take the opposite view of all this and to persuade Bortzoff that he was wrong, but I never succeeded. He hid his blinking eyes in his beard, and heard me out without making any remarks at all, for quite a long time. His face assumed a stupid expression. Then, wagging his hard, stubborn head, he replied, "Oh, how can I answer you, for, good Heaven, it's no use at all. I don't understand. I don't grasp even the words, let alone the ideas! What wonderful words you have! Science! What do I know about science? You say that every one should know how to read, when there won't be enough to read about! You can write all you want to, but you'll never get through! Where does all that lead us to? Oh, lu, lu, lu!"

I knew very well that the shepherd was making fun of me, but I didn't want to be less persistent than he was. That pleased him, and he became gentler and gentler. In one of these encounters, though, I was beaten back like a tennis ball.

After sunset, he was sitting on a bench before his little hut. In the pool near by, the frogs were croaking hoarsely, and I sometimes had to listen very closely to what he was saying.

"Come now! Let us get this right. There is need of an honest man, we'll say. How do we know whether a man's honest? Well, we say he's honest if he doesn't ever steal, if he gives alms to the poor, and if he looks after his family well. That's the best sort of honesty. All he knows is the part of the law that concerns him, not to touch anything that isn't his, and to keep what *is* his. That's what he

knows. That's all the learning he's got. And our government is made up of men just like that. Those men are the strongest ones in our country. The Germans, the French and the Turks, all of them yield to men like that. You know yourself that foreigners have tried to conquer Russia more than once. Several times they have got to Moscow, but the people I have been talking about sent them back home every time. The aggressors and the invaders were simply scattered to the winds like dust of the earth. No trace of them has been left. Every year there are fewer and fewer of the invading foreigners, and every year there are more and more of the simple, honest men. There will soon be so many of the simple, honest men that we won't know what to do with them. There you are!"

"Well, then, your idea of an honest man is simply a man who is merely unhappy, and only half intelligent?"

"What's that got to do with it? Nothing at all!" And after a long pause, Bortzoff went on with his musing. "Useless, all useless. A person cries without knowing why, and for that he is put in jail. I know of things just as stupid as that, many of them. The old chief of police has said to me, more than once, 'You know many things, Bortzoff, you have a good head on your shoulders.' And I have bowed very low, as I thought to myself all the time, 'What an idiot you are!' His wife was childless for seven years, yet he stayed with her as a hungry dog will stick by a corpse. That fellow even went so far as to die the same year she did. They say he died of grief. They said he was an honest man. He had one good thing about him, though, and that was his horse. It was a very good horse. I bled that horse, and I ought to know. He had fine lines. You might say he was carved by a sculptor.

"The most amusing one of all these honest folks was our landlady's son. She herself was named Olga Nikolaevna. She was a good specimen, I can tell you. She had no morals at all. Her husband had left her and gone off to some foreign country or other. She had a little, bold, pointed nose, and wore spectacles. They were tied to a black string that hung over one ear. She said she was a

doctor. She took care of certain people, I know. One of her feet had been crushed in a fire, and, since that accident, she made less noise than before.

"Her son, Mitia, was my special little friend. Both of us were very badly spoiled. After a while he went away to study, nobody knew where. We didn't see him for a long time. One day, when I was tending my sheep, he suddenly appeared, right before the slope where I was sitting making flutes out of green twigs. He came up running, and as if he were just rising from the earth. He asked me if I knew him. He had become tall, thin and bald, and he wore glasses. He carried a sort of net on his shoulder, he had a box on his back, and his legs were very thin, just mere straws. He caught butterflies and collected insects and plants, just like a magician. He talked to me just as he used to do, and as if I were only a child. He kept asking me if I remembered him. I said to him, 'They have made an imbecile out of you, Mitia. I am ashamed to remember you.' I was married then. 'What are you doing for a trade, Mitia?' I asked him. 'I make books,' he told me. 'I write about the lives of animals.' 'So it's like that,' I said. 'Well, you have a very agreeable occupation!'"

Bortzoff had the good nature of a drunkard. His moujiks began to take advantage of him. Some of them besought his aid, others borrowed his money. He gave me a fine straw hat which he possessed, and taught me to make the little straw trinkets which he could weave so cunningly. I also borrowed money from him, and begged him to give me his little knife.

His wit and intelligence took the place of book learning. He warned people that mosquitoes could convey disease. "Beware of the mosquitoes," counseled he. I never laughed at that advice, but acted as if I believed in it. All the while, though, I was wondering how mosquitoes could make any one sick.

At about this time he began to show signs of confusion. He uttered many things of no consequence or logic. Sometimes he would begin a talk about the moujiks. "Ah, how hard is their lot," he would say, and when he said that, he would give anybody anything he had, just for the asking.

Surely, the moujiks ought to be helped! He would have given them a hundred roubles if he had had the money.

As I looked at him, I thought, "Well, old fellow, you don't see very well in spite of your spectacles! You are very wise and skilful, your shoes are good, your food is excellent, your lands bring you much wealth. You need nothing at all, idiot that you are!" And I really lost my temper.

Bortzoff adopted the habit of chasing and catching all kinds of insects. I led him into the muddiest places I could find. There are quicksands in that region. You must be very wary of them, and look out for yourself. If the shepherds don't watch their sheep and lambs closely, it's good-bye to the animals! They are surely lost.

When I led Bortzoff near the quicksands, of course he got worried. He was an old shepherd. He would frown, pass his fingers through his beard and grumble to himself, uneasily. Sometimes he fell in up to his neck. Then we would pull him out and he would take off his clothes and spread them out on the bushes to dry. I would sometimes whisper to the young shepherd with us, "Nicolas, go and hide the master's trousers." The shepherd would hide them, and when the sheep were driven home at sunset the master would have to go along too, without his trousers. If it happened to be a gala day the good women and all the girls laughed at old Bortzoff.

However, all this didn't turn out well. The little Nicolas talked too much, and said that it was I who had invented that little jest. My old friend heard of it and came to see me, to scold me. He talked so much that he finally got very red, and could hardly keep back his tears. "You know very well what I have been for you! You know that I have loved you more than any one!" And with those words he went away. Our friendship ceased to exist from that day. Soon after that, he became ill, and died in the spring. Consumption, that's what he had.

That man was a good man, but what was he good for? Many of the very rich people are just like that. We had in our region a schoolmaster. His name was Piotr Alexandrovitch. He studied so hard that he finally began to

teach the young folks that all misfortunes were caused by the Czar. Nobody ever found out what the Czar had done to him. And Feldka Savinn, who is now chief of the village, went away to the city and denounced the teacher to the police. To reward Feldka the police gave him a gold piece, and the officers came that night to arrest the teacher.

In the days before Bortzoff died he was always repeating his idea about the uselessness of education. He used to say, "All these school teachers, all these educated souls, are insupportable. Healthy people can make themselves understood." One day he gave me quite a long talk.

"There's something dangerous in a man who knows too much. I do not know why this is so, but it is true, just the same. Suppose I need a leather tobacco pouch. If I tell you to buy me one I know that you will buy it and give it to me. That's because money means nothing to you. You have plenty of it. And with you knowing fellows all your goodness depends entirely on the money you happen to have, and which you get so easily. When you want something, you can't tell, half the time, what you want. Now, I know very well what I need, and my ideas are perfectly clear." And here Bortzoff closed his eyes, threw back his head, and a wild and savage noise came out of his beard as he laughed. Then he rubbed his eyes and continued:

"You just said something which is very wrong indeed. You said that the earth turns round. I have heard that before. Well, my friend, the earth turns only because it's your heads that turn, after the hard study they have to endure. You proclaim everywhere that the earth turns. It doesn't turn at all! It's all a lie. The earth *can't* turn. Nobody could stand such a thing."

Bortzoff had the air of a conqueror. He turned his eyes toward the pond near by. "Come! You don't know what the weather will be tomorrow, but I know that it will rain. How do I know that? What's the sign of rain? You know nothing about it, and I sha'n't tell you!" As he rolled a cigarette, he continued, proudly, "A shepherd always knows what the weather will be."

That evening Bortzoff affected me very unpleasantly. I

got rather sick of him, and after that I didn't see him for several months.

Somehow or other I learned that Bortzoff had two nephews. They were orphans, and their uncle was paying for their education. One of them was studying at the Veterinary Institute, at Kazan, and the other one was attending the Vladimir boarding school. Happening to run into Bortzoff in a store, I said to him, "Why Uncle Tim, what made you tell me all those stories? You rejected the idea of education, yet you are giving it to your own nephews!"

He blinked at me with his toad-like eyes and replied, "Is there any law which obliges me to tell the truth? If you tell the truth you are always punished for it." And he began to laugh.

"Those nephews are my very own," he remarked. "You, though, are nothing but a stranger, and you remind me of a wandering beggar. As for me, I behave like every other man. I look out for my own interests. I want my people to study. As for the others, why should they have any education? Do you understand? There you are!" And he placed his heavy paw of a hand on my shoulder. "You see, I'm not obliged to help the sons of my brother, but I do it because I want to. Maybe you think I wouldn't care for my nephews if their father had been a rich man. Have a cigarette?"

I lit a match for him and replied in a way to encourage him. "Well, you have fooled me finely, Uncle Tim. You would make a great actor." He was not pleased at this and grumbled, "You always will use words like that! Good God, speak like a Russian, talk like a human being! You're like the clown at a county fair!"

IN THE BOWELS OF THE EARTH

By ALEXANDRE KUPRINE

IT was an early springtime morn, fresh and besprinkled with dew. Not a cloud was overhead. Only at that point on the distant horizon where the sun would shortly make its apparition did tiny gray clouds, messengers heralding the break of day, quickly fade and evaporate as the minutes passed. As far as the eye could see, the entire steppe seemed inundated by an impalpable powder of pure gold. In the coarse, thick grass the huge diamonds of the morning dewdrops shimmered and radiated their multi-colored rays of light. The immense steppe gayly adorned itself with a variegated pattern of flowers. There were wild thorn-broom of brilliant yellow, little blue bells, pure white daisies and deep-dyed, crimson carnations. The early morning freshness carried the astringent but healthy odor of wormwood mingled with that of the leafless dodder, whose delicate perfume is suggestive of the almond tree.

Everything was resplendent; everything seemed to joyfully stretch itself while awaiting the first rays of the sun. Only here and there, in the deep ravines planted with scrawny bushes, did the damp, misty, blue shadows still linger on in memory of the departed night. Flying so far overhead that they were almost invisible, the skylarks flittered about, warbling as they soared; for a long time already the tireless crickets had been uttering their nervous, sharp "cri-cri." The awakened steppe appeared to breathe in deep, regular and powerful aspirations.

Brutally shattering the charm of this delightful break-of-day came the blast of the six o'clock whistle from the Gololobov mine; this interminable, hoarse sound rose like some groan or bitter complaint; at moments it would appear to die away, to strangle itself and disappear under the ground only to burst forth again all of a sudden with renewed and unexpected force.

On the immense, green horizon of this Siberian plain only this solitary mine, with its somber stockades dominated by the misshapen tower, recalled to mind the presence of mankind and his labor. The high, gaunt red chimneys with their soot-covered tops belched forth unceasingly thick columns of black, filthy smoke. From the distance came the sharp, irregular sound of hammers beating against iron plates and the drawn-out clatter of dragging chains. In the calm serenity of the smiling, early-morning hour, these unwonted metallic sounds assumed a rude and pitiless significance.

The second shift of miners was on the point of lowering itself into the earth. Almost two hundred men were collected together in the yard between the immense stacks of mine coal. With their sooty faces saturated with coal-dust and never washed for weeks on end, their ragged garments of every hue and variety, their hemp boots, old rubbers and some even with bare feet, they formed a motley mass of surging, howling humanity. Idiotic gibes floated on the air, mingling with coarse laughter or a convulsive fit of coughing.

Slowly the crowd diminished and disappeared through a narrow wooden door, over which was nailed a small, white board bearing the inscription: "LAMP ROOM." The lamp room was jammed with workmen. Seated at a long table ten men were steadily pouring oil into little glass lamps whose flame was protected by a sort of metallic netting. When the lamps were completely ready, the lamp-tender introduced a small slot of lead through the narrow aperture at the top of the wire netting, which he then proceeded to crush with one squeeze of his powerful pincers. In this manner the miner would find himself absolutely incapable of opening his lamp, and if the glass should happen to be broken the thin wire netting would render the flame inoffensive.

After the miner had received his lamp he would pass on into another room where the chief timekeeper would write down his name in the day-book while two assistants would meticulously examine his pockets, clothing and boots in order to ascertain that he was not carrying with

him any matches or automatic burner. Having convinced themselves of the absence of these prohibited articles, or merely not having succeeded in discovering them, the time-keeper would nod his head and exclaim in a sharp voice, "Pass along!"

Then the miner would penetrate into a long, wide, covered passageway situated directly over the principal "vein."

In this gallery the shift was being rapidly made. In the square opening leading to the very depths of the mine, two iron platforms, suspended from iron chains revolving on two pulleys fastened very high overhead, were in constant motion. While one of them was ascending the other one was being lowered to a depth of about three hundred meters.

The platform seemed to appear miraculously from out of the ground, laden with small carts filled with the raw coal which had just been torn from the very bowels of the earth. In the twinkling of an eye the workmen would drag the carts from the platform, roll them onto the small rails and, running along beside them, they would push them into the outer yard of the coal mine. Then the empty platform would be immediately covered with miners. A familiar signal would be given to the engine room by means of an electric bell; then the elevator would tremble, and, all of a sudden, with an appalling clatter it would disappear from view and vanish into the earth. One minute and still another minute would go by, during which one would hear only the rumbling of the machinery, the clanking of the revolving chains, and then another platform would appear from out of the ground, laden this time, not with coal, but with the dripping, grimy, shivering forms of miners which some mysterious, invisible and powerful force seemed to have suddenly thrown into the air. And this constant loading and unloading of men and coal would continue, rapidly and as regularly as the functioning of some powerful machine.

Standing with his mouth open, near the entrance to the shaft, little Vaska Lomakine—the "Pug," as the miners had nicknamed him—was peering into the yawning chasm,

which was continually belching forth from its dark depths a mass of men and coal. Vaska was a lad of twelve years of age. His features were absolutely black with coal dust and his blue eyes had a candid, naïve expression. His snub nose was comical to behold. He, too, was on the point of immediately descending into the mine, but the other men of his gang had not yet been assembled and he was waiting there for them. Scarcely six months had passed since Vaska had arrived from his distant village. He had not yet been able to assimilate the ways and customs of the miners nor the work there in the mine, which was too complicated for his still undeveloped and unimpressionable mind to grasp. Without his having realized it the mine had suggested to him a sort of supernatural world, filled with dark, mysterious and monstrous forces. Without any doubt the most mysterious creature in this strange world of his was the engineer. Vaska could catch sight of him through the windows in the partition separating the engine room. He could see him sitting there—a bearded, sullen figure, clad in a greasy leather vest with a cigar between his teeth and gold-rimmed glasses on his nose. Who was this man? Was he, indeed, a man at all? Without getting up or moving about, without taking the cigar from his mouth, he would merely press a button and immediately the heavy machinery, which had remained motionless until then, would start to revolve; the chains would begin clanking, the platform, with the rumble of thunder, would begin descending and the whole framework of the mine would begin trembling. What a miracle it was! And this man would calmly go on smoking as if nothing of all this was going on! Then he would press on a sort of little knob, pull back a certain steel bar; then, in a second's time, everything would stop and remain silent. . . .

"Perhaps he is a sorcerer," said Vaska to himself uneasily.

Another unfathomable man, endowed with an extraordinary power, was the head foreman, Paul Nikiforovitch, who was the sovereign of this black, humid and fearsome empire, in whose shadows and silence glimmered, at intervals, the luminous red dots of the lanterns. It was by his

orders that new galleries were excavated and new wooden frame supports were constructed.

Paul Nikiforovitch was exceedingly handsome, but he was very self-restrained and unsociable. His constant dealings with the subterranean forces of the earth seemed to have given him a peculiar and enigmatic character. His great physical strength had become legendary among the miners; such strapping fellows as Boukhalo and Vanka the Greek, who were always the ringleaders of the excitable and unruly element, never referred to the head foreman except in a tone of respectful consideration.

There was one human being, however, who Vaska held in even greater esteem than Paul Nikiforovitch and the engineer. He was the French director of the mine—a certain Mr. Charles. Vaska was quite incapable of finding any suitable comparison with which to define the omnipotence of this superhuman man. It seemed that he was capable of accomplishing anything, absolutely anything that might suggest itself to him. A mere sign of his hand or a mere glance from his eye held in the balance the destiny of all these checkers, foremen, miners, laborers and slate-sorters who, by thousands, owed their very livelihood to the mine. Whenever his tall silhouette and weather-beaten features, with their thick, black moustaches came into view, an atmosphere of apprehensive attention was immediately noticeable. Whenever he spoke to any one he would fix his large, cold eyes upon those of the person he was addressing, as if he was discovering something invisible within him. Prior to his encountering Mr. Charles, Vaska had been incapable of even imagining that such men as he existed in the world. Even his person exhaled a delicious perfume of some precious flower; Vaska had scented it one day when the director had passed within two steps of him without even having noticed the diminutive lad, who was standing there with his cap in his hands and his mouth wide open as he followed with a frightened gaze the receding figure of this earthly god.

"Come along there, Pug, climb aboard!" shouted a gruff voice.

The young boy gave a start of surprise and threw himself

onto the platform. The gang of workmen to which he was attached as an assistant was taking its place on the elevator. As a matter of fact, he had two immediate bosses over him, Uncle "Gristly" and Vanka the Greek. He was under their orders in the general living barracks; he worked alongside of them in the mine; he was at their beck and call during his hours of recreation and he would fulfill many domestic duties for them, the principal one of which consisted in running to the near-by cabaret-bar, "The Friends Meeting Place," where he would purchase brandy and cucumbers. Uncle Gristly belonged to that category of old miners who have been worn out by long years of heart-breaking labor. He did not make the slightest distinction between worthy and condemnable actions, always obedient to the strongest, always imposing his will on the weak and, in spite of his advanced age, he did not have the slightest influence over the other miners. Vanka the Greek, on the other hand, stimulated public opinion to a certain extent and aroused the passions of the entire barracks where gruff words and solid fists served as decisive arguments.

But, strange as it may appear, Vanka the Greek showed a certain solicitude towards Vaska. This solicitude, of course, revealed itself in a rude, uncouth way, but without any doubt it actually existed. Thus, for example, Vanka the Greek had placed the young lad in the best corner of the low sleeping berth with his feet near the little stove, without paying any attention to the protests of Uncle Gristly, to whom this place rightfully belonged. And, one fine day, when one of the miners had attempted to extort a few pennies from Vaska, the Greek had protected the young boy, "Just you leave him in peace, hein!" he had exclaimed quietly, barely raising himself on his low bunk, but accompanying his words with such a persuasive glance that the miner had moved away without making any further demands.

Five men took their places on the platform along with Vaska. The signal was given and immediately Vaska sensed an unaccustomed sensation of buoyancy throughout his whole body, quite as if wings had suddenly grown on his back.

Jerkily, and accompanied by rumblings, the platform began rapidly descending while the rough-hewn bricks of the wall assumed the aspect of an interminable gray band which rolled upward unceasingly. Then, all of a sudden, they were plunged in total darkness. The lanterns, trembling beneath the sudden, uneven jerks of the platform, barely glimmered in the grasp of the heavily bearded miners. Abruptly, Vaska had the impression that they were no longer descending but that they were actually mounting upwards. This optical illusion is always experienced by novices at the moment when the elevator reaches the middle of the shaft; Vaska had not yet succeeded in overcoming this deceiving impression which always caused him a slight dizziness. Gently the platform slowed down and touched the bottom of the shaft. Subterranean streams, gushing in the direction of the central pit, were falling in cascades and the miners ran from the platform in order to escape these torrential showers.

Workmen, clothed in heavy, oil-cloth raincoats with upturned hoods, were pushing the loaded kegs onto the platform. Uncle Gristly shouted a word of greeting to one of them, but the latter did not deign to respond. Then the gang broke up and scattered in different directions.

Vaska was always oppressed by a mute sensation of dread whenever he found himself below the ground. It seemed to him that all these long, black galleries about him were interminable. From time to time the pale red gleam of a lantern would glimmer in the distance—a mere tiny point of light, which would alternately appear and disappear in the darkness. The sound of footsteps resounded heavily and mysteriously. The air was damp, oppressive and cold. Occasionally one would perceive the sound of gurgling waters rushing behind the walls and, in these faint noises, Vaska imagined that he overheard sinister and menacing warnings.

Vaska followed on the heels of Uncle Gristly and Vanka the Greek. Swinging at arm's length their lanterns projected pale, sallow patches of light on the damp, sticky, mildewed walls of the gallery where their faltering, strange and monstrous shadows intermingled grotesquely.

Vaska recalled to mind all the mysterious and bloody traditions associated with the mine.

Here, a cave-in had entombed four men. Three of their dead bodies had been retrieved, but they had been unable to find the fourth one—it was whispered about that his soul still wandered in gallery number five. It was also stated that one of the old miners had lost himself in the passages, in spite of the fact that he knew them all by heart; they had only been able to locate him three days later, and had found him raving crazy and starving to death. . . . It was also affirmed that “some one” stalked about the dark mine—beyond a doubt this nameless “some one,” headless and as horrible as the frightful obscurity that had engendered him, really existed in the lower depths of the mine, but no genuine miner ever spoke about him, even when intoxicated. And whenever Vaska thought of this “some one” he could feel a frigid, light breath brush against him and he would begin to tremble. . . .

“Well, Vanka, you certainly did treat yourself to a wonderful blowout!” exclaimed Uncle Gristly, addressing the Greek.

The Greek refused to respond and disdainfully spat through his teeth. He had just squandered two months’ pay on a five-day spree, during which time he had scarcely slept at all, with the result that his nerves were now drawn to the breaking point.

“Old boy, there is no denying that it was a splendid spree!” continued Gristly. “You certainly handed it to the gang foreman! It’s just great!”

“Don’t bother me!” cut short the Greek.

“What is there to annoy you! I am not pestering you,” retorted Uncle Gristly, whose chief regret was that he had been unable to take part in the recent debauch. “However, my dear friend, at present you won’t be able to escape the orders from the head office. You will have your case properly attended to now.”

“Shut up!”

“What do you mean by that! It is no longer a question of rolling the billiard balls around in the cabaret! As

Serge Trifonovitch wisely put it: 'Let him continue! Later on he will have to politely ask my permission!'

"Shut up, you dog!" brutally responded the Greek, whose eyes seemed to blaze with anger in the obscurity of the gallery.

"Well, after all, it doesn't make any difference to me! I won't say another word," responded Uncle Gristly.

It was necessary to walk more than a kilometer in order to attain the point where they were to work. The gang of workmen abandoned the main gallery and turned aside into the little, tortuous passages. At certain places the miners were obliged to stoop over in order not to strike the roof of the gallery. At every step the air became damper and more oppressive.

Finally they reached the vein where they were to work. In this narrow, compact space it was quite impossible to work either standing up or seated. In order to chop away the coal it was necessary to lay flat on one's back and this is the most difficult and exhausting position imaginable.

Slowly and silently Uncle Gristly and Vanka the Greek began to strip themselves; then, nude to the waist line, they sprawled themselves out side by side. In this awkward, uncomfortable position the Greek immediately felt the effects of his three sleepless nights and the poisoning of his entire system caused by the cheap brandy. He felt a dull ache throughout his whole body, as if some one had flogged him with a stick. His arms responded with difficulty and his weighted head seemed to be filled with raw coal. But the Greek would never have soiled his reputation as a miner by showing that he was feeling ill.

Mute and concentrated, with his teeth tightly locked, he dug his pick into the fragile, resonant slabs of coal. At moments everything would disappear before his eyes; the low vein of coal, the dull gleam of the broken slabs and the scrawny body of Uncle Gristly, lying there by his side. His mind seemed to fall asleep; his ears rang with the notes of the accordion he had heard the day before; now they seemed nauseatingly monotonous and disagreeable to him, but the expert, powerful movements of his arms continued their accustomed labor. Detaching one

layer after another of the coal situated immediately over his head, the Greek, almost unconsciously, wriggled along on his back until he had left his feeble companion far behind him.

Beneath his pick the raw coal showered in every direction, besprinkling his streaming, perspiring features. Whenever he detached a large slab, the Greek only paused for a moment to shove it along with his feet and then resumed his labor with a savage fury. On two occasions already Vaska had loaded his basket and had gone to dump it in the main gallery, where all the coal extracted from the lateral passages was piled up in one large heap.

As he was returning empty handed on his second trip he was surprised by the strange sounds he heard coming from the opening of the new vein. Some one was groaning and howling as if he was being strangled to death. At first Vaska thought that some of the miners were fighting together. He stopped, terrified, but the frightened voice of Uncle Gristly was calling him:

"What are you waiting there for, Lad? Hurry along here!"

Vanka the Greek was writhing on the ground in terrible convulsions. Froth was escaping from his contracted lips, his face had turned quite blue and his eyelids, wide open, were trembling convulsively. Only the whites of his eyes were visible.

Uncle Gristly had completely lost his presence of mind and he only sought to hold the Greek with his cold, trembling hands while attempting to calm him with plaintive words:

"Come now, Vanka, do stop. . . . That's enough, now! Come now. . . ."

It was an atrocious epileptic fit. A frightful and mysterious force seemed to raise the miner's body and twist it in atrocious, unruly convulsions. At times he would arch himself in a half circle with only his neck and heels touching the earth, then he would fall back at full length and double himself up in such a way that his knees would touch his chin. At other times he would become as rigid as a stick and all the muscles in his body would quiver.

"Good Lord! This is a fine predicament!" stuttered

Uncle Gristly, utterly terrified. "Come now, Vanka, do stop! . . . Listen to me. Heavens above! How did it happen that he was seized all of a sudden like this? . . . Pug, you wait here and watch him while I run and fetch assistance," Gristly finally decided.

"But, Uncle Gristly . . . what is there that I can do?" Vaska plaintively replied.

"Do you take this opportunity to remonstrate with me? I tell you that you are to stay here, that's all!" shouted Uncle Gristly angrily as he hastily drew on his leather vest and started running from the gallery.

Vaska was left alone with the Greek, who was still writhing. For how long did he remain like this, huddled up in a corner and filled with a superstitious terror which prevented him from making the slightest movement? It would have been quite impossible for him to have replied.

But gradually the convulsions which shook the Greek's body became less frequent, the death rattle in his throat subsided, and the eyelids slowly covered the terrible whites of his eyes. Then suddenly Vanka took a long, deep breath and fell back motionless.

Vaska's dread increased.

"Oh, Lord! Can it be that he is dead?" he said to himself.

No sooner had this thought entered his mind than a wave of terror made his hair fairly stand on end. Scarcely daring to breathe he crawled over to the sick man's side and placed his hand on his nude chest. Although it was quite cold it rose and fell imperceptibly.

"Uncle Vanka, oh Uncle Vanka!" murmured the little boy.

But the Greek did not reply.

"Get up, Uncle Vanka! Let me lead you to the infirmary, hein, Uncle Vanka!"

The sound of hastening steps could be heard coming from the near-by gallery.

"Ah! thank God! It is Uncle Gristly who is returning," thought Vaska greatly relieved.

But it was not Uncle Gristly at all.

An unknown miner stopped and glanced hastily into the low passage which he lit up with his lamp.

"Who is in there? Climb immediately to the surface!" he shouted in an unnatural, imperative tone of voice.

"Something has happened to Uncle Vanka. He has fallen down and is unable to say a word," cried Vaska, rushing toward him.

The miner looked into the face of the Greek.

"What is it that has happened to him now?" inquired the miner, shaking his head. "Hey there, Vanka, get up!" he shouted, shaking the sick man's arm. "I tell you to get up. There has been a cave-in at number three shaft. Do you hear me, Vanka?"

The Greek mumbled something unintelligible, but he did not open his eyes.

"I have no time to waste with the drunkard," exclaimed the miner impatiently. "My lad, you must wake him up as soon as you can, for it is quite likely that there will be a cave-in here as well and, in that case, you will be crushed like rats in a trap."

His head disappeared in the black opening of the gallery. After a few seconds one could not even hear the sound of his hurrying feet. . . .

Vaska soon came to appreciate his terrible situation. At any moment the thousands of tons of earth, suspended above his head, might give way and crush him like an insect without his even being able to shout for aid.

Utterly desperate Vaska hurled himself at the miner's prostrate form and shook his shoulder with all the strength he possessed.

"Wake up, Uncle Vanka, do wake up, Uncle Vanka!" he shouted as loud as he possibly could.

His sensitive ear could perceive from behind the walls to the right and left of them the sound of heavy, hurried and excited footsteps. All the workmen of that shift were racing towards the exit, possessed with the same terror with which Vaska was now seized. During the space of a second Vaska was seized with the temptation of abandoning the sleeping Greek to his fate and to race away without looking around. But at this same instant an incomprehensible,

unexplainable sentiment halted him. He began again to shake the Greek's arms, shoulders and head. Weeping, he began pleading with him.

The miner's head swayed from one side to the other and his raised arm fell back to the ground with a thud. At this moment Vaska caught sight of a wheelbarrow and a happy thought entered his brain. With a terrible effort he pulled the massive body—heavy as that of a dead man's—along the ground and lifted it onto the wheelbarrow. He threw the limp, dangling legs over the sides of the wheelbarrow and then laboriously wheeled the Greek out of the low passage.

By this time the galleries were quite deserted.

From far in the distance came the sound of the last, hurrying stragglers. Vaska ran along, making superhuman efforts to preserve his balance. His thin, childish arms were stretched out and benumbed. He was unable to catch his breath and sledge hammers were beating against his temples. Huge, flaming circles danced before his eyes. If only he could stop and rest for a moment! But no! That was quite impossible!

Certain death was following on his heels. Already he could feel the rustling of its wings against his back.

Thank the Lord! He had attained the last corner! In the distance glimmered the red flame of the torches lighting the elevator.

The men were jammed together on the platform.

But he would have to hurry! . . . There was one more desperate effort to be made. . . .

But, Heavens! What was that he saw? The elevator was rising! Now it was on the very point of disappearing! "Stop! Stop!" he shouted.

A hoarse cry burst from Vaska's lips. The circles of fire that were dancing before his eyes leaped into a monstrous blaze and then everything crumbled about him with a deafening crash. . . .

When Vaska regained consciousness he found himself in the open air. He was stretched out on a lambskin coat. A crowd of people was standing about him. A large, portly man was rubbing his temples. The director, Mr. Charles, was also on hand. He was waiting to catch Vaska's first

glance of regained consciousness. His severe lips were trembling a little and he murmured:

"Ah! What an heroic, brave lad he is!"

Vaska was unable to understand these words, but on the outer ranks of the crowd he had been able to catch sight of the pale, anxious features of his Uncle Vanka. And the glance that these two human beings exchanged between them at that instant united them for all the rest of their lives.

IBYCUS

By ALEXIS TOLSTOI

MAN certainly must have been hard put when he adopted that disgusting term, "evacuation." It would be far nicer to say departure, emigration or even general and temporary change of residence. If this were only so, people would not be dumbfounded and they would not start hurling themselves pell-mell into motor trucks and horse-drawn carriages as if wild lions were at their very heels.

In plain Russian this is what the word "evacuation" signifies: "Each one for himself!" But, on the other hand, if you were to halt in the vicinity of some populous city square and begin shouting at the top of your voice: "Each one for himself!" you would be properly and unmercifully flogged.

But it is not even necessary to utter the term "evacuation"; just merely breathe this magic word of Ibycus from the tips of your lips. . . . You will immediately observe that the respectable passer-by has already turned quite pale and that he has thrown a desperately savage glance about him; another man appears to have suddenly become petrified, as if he had suddenly found himself face to face with some specter arising from the tomb. . . . A third individual, grabbing hold of some fourth person, exclaims excitedly:

"What has happened? Must we again flee?"

"Leave me alone! I can't tell you anything."

"But where are we going to find refuge now? In the sea?"

In this manner is the cursed word broadcasted in magic wave sounds all about the city. "E-vac-u-a-tion"; these few syllables contain more dreadful significance than any of Shakespeare's tragedies. . . .

. . . Fleeing in one direction the husband will escape

aboard some ocean liner while the wife will flee by train, and their son—who, a moment ago, they were holding by the hand—has completely dropped out of sight and is by now assuredly weeping bitterly on the shore of some distant and barren coast. . . . Still another man, who was an absolute dictator not later than this very same morning and who, in order to terrify the populace, had ordered the station master to be strung up from the freight car charger along with his assistant and a third individual with tattooed arms who was under suspicion, finds himself the very same night aboard some vessel where, with his little bag of personal effects, he now huddles alongside of the smoke stack, delighted at the thought of being carried away somewhere. . . .

. . . Some crafty dealer had just succeeded in becoming an army supply agent and his wife was on the point of acquiring the sealskin and sable coat from the maid of honor to the Baroness Obermuler when—Heavens above!—all these projects were thrown to the dogs. All the purchases, the sealskin and sable coat and the trunk filled with sumptuous lingerie was stolen by the express driver! Furthermore, when they were on the point of boarding the ship the faithful and devoted friend of the previous day—an officer of the guards who had sought their good graces and had respectfully kissed their finger tips—had suddenly caught hold of the contractor's wife and had begun striking her hat with his scabbard in an effort to make it fall from the platform of the car. . . .

Indeed it is utterly impossible to enumerate all the strange happenings and disagreeable occurrences which take place during an evacuation. Absolutely extenuated, men take to carriages and gallop away, having in their pockets only three hundred absolutely useless *carbavantzev* and decked out in cloth vests which were intended for quite a different use than this. Their future destiny is quite unknown to them and there is a buzzing and ringing in their ears. . . . It is said of Russians that they are difficult to arouse. This is not true; it is an antiquated opinion. Such and such a person of lowly culture who was, to all appearances, predestined to live and expire in some out-of-the-way place,

now suddenly finds himself perched on the top of a railway carriage with his broken eyeglasses still on his nose, a kit bag attached to his stooped shoulders and bound for Africa with his hair to the breeze.

Ceanionn Ivanovitch Nievzoroff had been through even worse upheavals than that which occurred at Odessa during the fifth and sixth of April. Nothing really extraordinary had occurred at that time. The populace had rolled from the center of the town towards the harbor, while the inhabitants of the surrounding countryside had collected in the heart of the city without having been in the least infuriated by the fact that the foreign legions were boarding their ships while the Russian armies were retreating by way of land in the direction of Roumania. By an inherited force of habit the stock jobbers and second-hand dealers had already collected at the corner of Deribasovskaja Street when a slight volley of firing had excited and then dispersed them. Then the Fankoni Café had closed its doors. Already the Sovdep were seated in the Town Hall, while along the streets bordering the docks in front of the statue to the Cardinal Richelieu the gun carriages, canteens, cannons and the Zouaves were still passing by quite unconcerned as to whether they would embark or not. Those who had been unable to escape wandered aimlessly along the boulevard, staring with wild eyes at the ocean liners and the black smoke pouring forth from their chimneys.

Ah! think of the significance this smoke and these rusty vessels had! The thousands of people who were leaving were pushing and shoving their way along the harbor front. Nothing but a narrow gang plank separated distasteful Russia from those seemingly celestial countries where there were neither revolutions nor evacuations, where five-story shops were stocked with moderate-price wearing apparel, where one could repose in soft beds (and not on tables or even in bath tubs), and where—without forever standing in line—man could go wherever he chose and remain as long as he wanted to in rooms fitted with running water and electric light. . . .

. . . Those lands where a severe but just policeman stands at every street crossing assuring the peace and protecting

the property of the citizens. Lands where the automobiles are not requisitioned and where the streets shine like polished floors. Lands where machine guns are not being continually fired and where interminable processions do not file past with their damned flags, and where, at the mere sight of a simple day laborer, one is not compelled to assume an ~~an~~ interested mien and reveal an obliging smile, but where one is allowed to pass alongside of a proletarian with a sense of personal pride. . . .

Only a few steps along, a gangway separated one from all this. The ocean liners in the outer harbor proclaimed this luminous existence: "We are waiting to carry you to foreign lands!" And at the same time the "Reds" in the vicinity of the Fontanoff and Perecipi depot were commencing an intermittent firing. A large number of motor boats, rowboats and small rafts, filled with men and baggage, were making their way toward the outer port. Along the docks there was a confusion of whinnying horses, lumbering trucks and piled-up trunks, while the sneak-thieves were saying a final farewell to the people's stuffed pockets. . . .

"Citizens," shouted a boisterous sailor, driving up in a carriage loaded with the admiral's baggage and flaying a passage in the midst of the crowd, "My dear citizens, why are you running away? . . . Brr! Whoa, there!" and he whipped the horse, who was kicking against the shafts of the cart. "Remain where you are, my good fellows. All of you will be very nicely taken care of . . ." After saying this he burst out laughing.

In the vicinity of the gangway people were shouting: "Honorable officer, do allow me to pass. My feet are utterly exhausted! . . . We have been standing here for forty-eight hours and it is absolutely ridiculous. . . . My child is dying while you keep on loading the twenty *poud* boxes belonging to all the profiteers."

"Away with you! It's not your turn! Go on, get back. . . ."

"Show your passports! Get your passports ready! . . ."

All this hue and cry did not preoccupy Ceanionn Ivanovitch very much. He was already aboard the liner *Cau-*

case. His mind was delightfully free from worry. Saliva flowed freely into his mouth and he would spit it out over the side of the boat into the water below, where a basket, full of packages which had fallen from the hoisting ladder, was floating about.

Since the preceding evening Ceanionn Ivanovitch spoke with a pronounced foreign accent. According to the passport he carried he was a former Russian citizen by the name of Simon Navzaraky. Five thousand francs, along with a trunk stuffed with young astrakhan hides of considerable value, had quieted whatever twinges of conscience he might have had. Not a single trace could now be found of that former personality of the old Nievzoroff which had so conscientiously sought the spangles of a dreamer's happiness. The Russian revolution had crushed all such sensitiveness as this from his soul. He had been transformed into a cold calculator and a wary misanthrope. He was escaping to foreign lands with the hope of finding there some safe and honorable position in the full light of day. He was not in the least concerned as to his choice of a new native land; that, indeed, mattered little; financial considerations would determine the most desirable place in which to locate. And to amuse himself either with some Turkish girl or some woman of Dounaj, or else with some German maid or little French miss—always amounted to about the same thing anyway, according to his way of thinking. All he asked was that perfect law and order should reign throughout the land.

With the object in mind of creating the impression that he was, in all respects, a highly well-intentioned personality, Ceanionn Ivanovitch—although still there in the port of Odessa and thousands of miles distant from the nearest frontier—even went so far as to assume a severe and irreproachable expression; he allowed his arms to hang down along the seams of his trousers and he would speak in an undertone, but clearly enough, and, if necessary, in perfect Russian. But one might also have just as readily said that he was not speaking in Russian at all. However, the manner in which he would spit over the deck railing betrayed him. It was in this way that he revealed his

impatience to get away from the locality just as soon as possible. And, furthermore—who did all this water belong to into which it pleased him to expectorate?

There was but one uneasy spark burning in his soul which robbed him of his tranquillity—it was the horror he had for the revolutionists. Liverobsky, standing alongside of Nievzoroff on the deck, suggested organizing a system for spying on their fellow passengers during the duration of the voyage, with the intention of learning their political opinions and of forming a clear conception of their status. Such documentation might possibly prove valuable later on. Ceanionn Ivanovitch readily assented to this proposition. He made up his mind that he would not concern himself with his own private affairs until he had reached Constantinople. Eventually the loading of the boat was completed. Exhausted, the officers in charge of the loading brought along with them on the float all the remaining trunks and safe deposit vaults. On the bridge appeared the idol of the hour—the French captain of the vessel—a huge, burly man with a black beard and wearing a blue jacket with officer's stripes. The steamship *Caucase* bellowed a deep, hoarse note which seemed to come from the very depths of its rusty insides and then slowly glided away into the outer harbor, laden with three thousand men and veritable mountains of baggage.

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On the eighth of April, after having lingered in the outer bay for several interminable days, the steamship *Caucase* finally sailed away in a southwesterly direction. Gradually it vanished into the misty haze hanging over the low coast line of New Russia. There were a few people standing on the deck who were lamenting—"Farewell, O Russia, farewell!" Then a bell was sounded and in a twinkling the exposed decks of the steamer were literally covered by the sleeping forms of all the refugees. They fell asleep in the cabins, in the corridors and even in the hold of the ship beneath the resounding clamor of the engines. Slowly the two masts of the liner advanced through the star-lit ocean.

By the glare of the searchlight Liverobsky exhibited a complete plan of the vessel to Ceanionn Ivanovitch.

"You will be responsible for what goes on in the rear," he said smilingly, "and I will take care of the forward part. The vessel has four separate holds and two main decks. The headquarters staff is located in the two central holds. All the riff-raff and the general public are located at the two extremities. The business men, financiers and wealthy bourgeois are quartered on the upper deck, along the corridors and in the various cabins. Gavrin, the Governor of Odessa, has his quarters in the main hall, quite apart from all the rest. He has twelve trunks filled with currency and many iron safe deposit boxes stuffed with valuables. In addition to all this there is the third and highest deck, where there are but two compartments: a smoking room and a salon. This deck is of particular importance; later on you will see for yourself why this is so. Now the monarchists, without taking us into consideration, have organized a system for counter-spying. Keep your ears wide open and note down carefully on a special list everything you have overheard. When we arrive at Constantinople we will show it to the French Headquarters staff and you can be sure that the Allies know how to reward such valuable information as this.

Liverobsky then tucked away the plan and, with a nod to Nievzoroff, he disappeared into the pilot's compartment. When he had gone Ceanionn Ivanovitch climbed over the forms of the sleeping people around him and made his way to the front of the vessel where a mild April breeze was blowing across the ship. Ceanionn Ivanovitch stretched himself out alongside of his trunk, drew a blanket over him, but, instead of going to sleep, he began to meditate.

His worldly existence did not appear very enviable to him. Decidedly, the world was a very ugly place to live in. Ah! Mankind! If only little butterflies, pleasing lady-birds and tiny flies could take the place of man! . . . Willingly would he go to a world where one is not forever being insulted. What a pleasure it would be to sit down in front of a bowl of samovar without a single disagreeable human being coming along to bother one! Ah! Men! Men! . . .

Ceanionn Ivanovitch relived in his memory the years that had gone by and a multitude of distasteful figures presented themselves to him—each one of them more disgusting than the other. He even groaned aloud when he recalled to mind the two masts appearing through the fog, the tar-soaked open space in front of the Exchange and the bloated features of the hangman. "No, there is no getting around it, it is he, that cursed Ibycus, who pursues me relentlessly wherever I go and assumes the shape of all these revolting features about me." At the mere thought of this, Nievzoroff's backbone turned cold from superstitious fright. "He will finish by wearing me out completely. Everything is going from bad to worse. First of all I was a witness to an execution, then I became a police spy and, if things continue in this manner, the day will come when I shall find myself obliged to kill somebody."

Ceanionn Ivanovitch drew his feet closer to him and leaned back against the trunk. Sitting alongside of him there was a man wearing a doctor's cap.

Turning toward Nievzoroff his alcoholic face with its short, red beard the man exclaimed: "You are unable to go to sleep. Can you let me have some matches? Thanks. I, too, am unable to sleep. We are taking a long journey, hein? What utter foolishness!"

It disgusted Ceanionn Ivanovitch to talk. He wrapped his arms about his knees and rested his chin on them. The doctor drew still nearer, puffing away on his cigarette.

"It is a pleasure for me to sit here quietly and review the history of my country. Note this: Peter the Third was assassinated by a bottle. Catherine the Great was empaled and pitched into the public cesspool. Paul had his skull fractured by a snuffbox and Alexander the Saviour was reduced to ashes while the Colonel and his two successors were shot. Fine work, indeed! Ah! these Slavs! Hold God in fear and respect the Tzar. On the other hand, your cultured élite has been endeavoring for more than half a century to undermine the foundations of royalty and it has sanctioned political crimes. . . . Such men as Sozonoff, Krlaeff"—and saying this the doctor gritted his teeth—"Such people as Marie Spiridonoff and many others are but

old grandmothers and grandfathers. And Leon Tolstoi? That merciful old man! The Count behind the plow! And what of the holy moujik who destroyed the fine estates and maimed the thoroughbred animals? And the Constituent Assembly with its president, Victor Tchernov! That is all nothing less than unfathomable madness! But this is what liberty amounts to. Here, now, is what I wanted to say to you: I am carrying away a special document with me. Before very long I shall reach Paris and there, in the central point of the world, right on the main boulevards, I shall rent a show window in which, of course, I shall place the sign 'Russian Show Window.' There I shall exhibit portraits of Mikailovsky, Tchernitchevsky, red banners, broken chains of bondage, the Genius of Liberty and other similar things. And in the very center of all this I shall tack up this thing here. . . ."

The doctor drew forth from his pocket a little, cloth-bound notebook, which he opened with tender solicitude. Then he said:

"This little notebook belonged to the very well-known liberalist and the heroic member of the Douma and of the Constituent Assembly. There, now! And what do you think it contains? The most noble of thoughts? Words of an immortal order? The outlines of famous speeches? No. Unfortunately this is not the case. Mere notations as to the amount of money loaned and to whom it was advanced. Precisely! Then there are the addresses of certain doctors and prescriptions for the treatment of venereal diseases. And that is absolutely all! This, then, is what one discovers in the notebook of a liberator and an adversary of despotism! We shall tack this up. We will nail up our liberal liberator in the show window of some crowded main street."

The doctor continued speaking in an unnatural jerky tone of voice: "Yesterday I was greatly amused throughout the entire day. Up there on the third deck a man was walking up and down. His somber features were shaded by a broad-brimmed hat and his stocky, thick-set body resembled that of Vije's. From below, three members of the monarchist supreme council—Priloukov, Babitch and Cheglov—were

watching him. As for him, he was smiling dangerously, that's the word—dangerously. And do you know who this man was? He is one of the most frightful and horrible of the terrorists. It is just like Noah's Ark on this ship with the lion and the gazelle escaping from the deluge. I laugh about it—and can't even go to sleep—but I'm afraid that misfortune will overtake our ship. But the worst of it is that we are no longer in Russia where such things as this come to pass."

"Where what things come to pass?" Ceanionn Ivanovitch prudently inquired. The doctor remained silent and examined him curiously. He again took the matches and proceeded to light his pipe.

"To tell the truth I marvel at the Bolsheviks," he stated, spitting on the deck. "They are nothing more or less than young boys. They make room both to the left and to right of them. The educated people are placed at the stems and the highly esteemed peasants are put at the roots. But, speaking of the laborers—I am quite at a loss to understand the veritable salad they have concocted. But after all, if one takes a good look about, they will have cleared a path for us six months' time from now."

"Who do you refer to by 'us'?" demanded Ceanionn Ivanovitch.

"We—the Fourth International, of course. Yes, yes, there is a great deal we can learn from the Bolsheviks."

"Just the same, it seems to me that you are going a bit strong in what you say."

"I say 'us' when we are in their country. Let us learn our lessons in the best school, my little father."

Saying this, the doctor shoved his finger into the bowl of his pipe and uttered little chuckles of delight which caused Nievzoroff to glare at him with mute rage. Then the bell was sounded. At this moment the scowling revolutionist with his broad-brimmed hat was to be seen standing on the upper deck and he was doubtlessly thinking with anguish that in truth the Russian people do not value their liberty.

When the very first rays of dawn appeared the pas-

sengers would begin to arise. Those of the upper deck would be among the first to stir themselves. They would stretch and rub themselves as they idly contemplated the sea.

The colored cook would come out on the deck wearing his soiled bonnet. Then he would proceed to dump overboard a bucketful of greasy dishwater, after which he would sit down near a barrel and start peeling potatoes. Two assistant bakers would start lighting the fires in the temporary stoves erected there on the deck. Near the water-plugs there were already a few soldiers wearing very wide trousers and torn suspenders who were bespattering themselves while washing their necks in the salt water. The civilians were beginning to emerge from their bunks, utterly disheveled in appearance and with their eyes still red and puffed with sleep. Immediately a long line would form in front of the deck wash-rooms. The women would shiver and draw their furs closer about them. Collarless politicians, storming generals and lean cavalry officers would also take their places in line.

"He has been in there twenty minutes already," some one would mutter down the line.

"No doubt it is some sick person."

"He's not a bit sicker than you are! I ought to know; I slept alongside of him. He's merely a man utterly deprived of general culture and knowledge of the world."

"It is absolutely outrageous! Go ahead and bang on the door."

"Won't you knock on the door, my Captain? One must show some consideration for other people. We are not at home here."

The deck was becoming more and more crowded every minute. From beneath the canvas awning which protected the pile of trunks there appeared the purple features and stocky form of the irate Cheglov—member of the monarchist supreme council and a wealthy landowner of the Saratov government. He dragged his wife by the hand from under the canvas covering—that celebrated light-opera singer—and then proceeded to pull forth a basket of provisions and a large can of wine. They both seated

themselves near the deck kitchen and began eating their breakfast. During this time the large earthen pots were steaming with the beans which were being boiled in fat. The small colored boys were opening the cans of preserved meat imported from Australia. Near the kitchen a group of people were conversing:

"What! Are we going to have beans again? It's revolting!"

"My stomach simply refuses to digest them. It is nothing less than an imposition."

"Your Highness—are you aware of where this meat comes from? It is the flesh of our equals—the Australian monkeys! I am a naturalist and I know what I am talking about."

"It quite disgusted me even yesterday. This is what it means to have dealings with the Allies!"

"In the first-class division one is served with the very best of breakfasts. There are four separate courses!"

"All this is for the profiteers. They are the only Jews in the first-class section. They are the ones who organized the revolution and we are the ones who are obliged to devour monkey flesh!"

Ceanionn Ivanovitch hurried in the direction of the kitchen in order to be able to smell the odor of the cooking beans. Suddenly a middle-aged woman, who was fingering a gold chain which dangled down over her lace-covered bosom, planted herself resolutely in front of him and exclaimed:

"We must show that we have absolute faith. Everything is for the best. With our poor three dimensions we are able to see just how imperfect is our world. Yes, this is the actual state of affairs and yet such is not really the case at all!" She was speaking very rapidly in a sharp, penetrating tone of voice. Her teeth were chattering slightly against each other. A stale odor of perfume and perspiration emanated from her person. Her name was Devo—the well-known theosophist. "Our physical organization is nothing more than the counterpart of that gigantic and terrible struggle that is going on up there in the super-physical world. But the supreme struggle has been de-

clared: it will result in the triumph of Right, of Justice, and the eternal transformation of the frightful chaos into the perfect cosmos. It is of absolutely no consequence at all that this happens to be the flesh of our equals, the monkeys; it is of no consequence whatever! Providence will provide new adepts for the vegetarian cause. The Hindus only considered fruits and vegetables as being edible. Everything else is nothing less than pure cannibalism."

Nievzoroff attempted in vain to escape from this conversation, but Devo cornered him against the deck-rail. Her porcelain teeth chattered right under Ceanionn Ivanovitch's nose.

"With terrific speed—in an hour—or in a century—we will approach the great initiation. I can foresee all this in my brethren's eyes. The revolution is an act of consecration on the part of the people; indeed this is so. Who are the Bolsheviks? A multitude of evil spirits have found the way to force their entrance into the physical world and to become materialized in the emanation of wrong-doing. This has been accomplished exactly in the same way as the angels once presented themselves before the Saints in the Egyptian desert—those angels who were the incarnation of righteousness. When the great masses in Russia begin to comprehend this—they will begin to see things as they really are, and the Bolsheviks—the demons—will suddenly disappear from the world. I, myself, was even the witness of just such a breaking-up of the material organism as this. I was closeted with a police commissary who was subjecting me to the ordeal of a rigid cross-examination. He was armed with two revolvers. I replied to all the stupid questions demanded of me while at the same time I concentrated my mind on pure meditation. Mysterious blue fluids emanated from me and the police official began to be quite upset. Then, as his discomfort increased, he started to yawn and finally the objects which were located behind him became clearly visible through his transparent body. I uttered a prayer to the guardian angel of the world and the police commissary, with a feeble groan, disappeared completely from

view. One vessel after another will carry us towards those luminous realms where we will abide when we have become sufficiently enlightened and purified. However, you must refrain from eating meat, my dear friend, and you must not smoke. In addition you must rinse your nose every morning with pure spring water. We are now penetrating into the realm of pure thought."

At this instant such a strong odor of beans was wafted in their direction that Devo turned about and looked at the cook's aids. They were stirring the bean soup with a soup-ladle and were pouring it into empty preserved-meat cans, bowls, jugs and whatever receptacles the half-starved refugees held out to them.

All this noise attracted the attention of the passengers on the middle deck who had already had their fill in the dining-hall of the first-class section. All of them were either financiers, sugar or wheat kings or coal magnates. In reality there were far more of them aboard the liner than one would have imagined at the embarkation.

There was but one spectator looking on from the third and highest deck: the terrorist with his broad-brimmed hat. He was slowly eating his ration of beans.

After his breakfast Ceanionn Ivanovitch undertook more systematically his observation of what was going on in the section of the ship which had been allotted to him. He descended into the main hold on the pretext of hunting for his trunks and was utterly dumbfounded by the clicking of the countless typewriting machines. In every possible corner disgruntled generals, surrounded by their staffs, were seated on the edge of their berths or on overturned boxes and were busily dictating orders to the army, along with various complaints and pure foolishness. Stunning adjutants were bounding up the narrow stairs leading to the deck—four steps at a time—where they would proceed to tack up their notices in the most visible places they could find. To tell the truth, the generals no longer had any army, but men, staffs and money were still at their disposal. It was for this reason that the generals acted quite as if they still had an army under them and it pleased them to be able to show their iron will and their military dis-

dain for the reverses meted out to them by Fate and also to live up to their obligations. In the depths of this hold everything appeared to be going on quite for the best. Nievzoroff then descended into the compartment located towards the prow of the vessel. It was a dark, damp place infested with rats. There, swinging in their hammocks suspended three rows deep, he found the politicians, emigrant landowners, journalists, employees of various organizations and also some members of the Radical Party. Almost all of them were accompanied by their wives and children, and they were resting and talking among themselves.

"I am perfectly reassured and I am unable to understand your pessimism," exclaimed one of them, his glasses almost slipping from his nose and leaning his bearded face over the edge of his hammock. "It is a country utterly deprived of intellect and it is predestined to perish. . . . While we still found ourselves to the South we were at least impeding the advance of the Red forces. . . . A body without a brain is deprived of all intelligent action. . . . Before six months have gone by the Bolsheviks will drown themselves in their own gory filth."

"Six months indeed!—you are very kind to say that," responded a voice from some hammock lost in the shadows. "My dear fellow, you are far too liberal with your six months! I'll accord you one month's time at the very most."

"But I am curious to know what you will do to drive them away."

"And I should like to know if your cheerful optimism would last were you to come face to face with the bandits. All that, my little father, is nothing but concealed Bolshevism. The only language they understand is brute force! We must begin shouting at the top of our lungs: 'Help! We are being robbed! We are being assassinated! . . .'. To repay them for their assistance we will give Sachaline to the Japanese, the Caucasus to the English, Smolensk to the Poles and Crimea to the French. We can very well do without these outlying districts and we will even be strengthened thereby."

"Hold on there! It is pure folly! We will ask for aid in the name of culture and humanity, in the name of advanced Russian art, and our appeal will be heard by the Entente. In Occidental Europe there are no profiteers, cynics and cowards."

"Ha, ha!"

"What do you mean by 'Ha, ha'? Can one possibly laugh at a Christian civilization that is over two thousand years old? And can one jeer at the French Revolution? And what of Pascal and Renan? Do you still laugh? Indeed, I don't know why I even attempt to reason with you. We are on our way to the center of the very highest culture that exists and not bound for Asia and the Tchingis Han tribes!"

"So, according to you, the evacuation of Odessa is a laughing matter?"

"Odessa caused the Allies to make a tragic blunder. And now it is our duty to reveal the absolute truth about it. Europe will blush with shame. . . ."

"Oh, Lord!"

After a moment's silence the man who wore the nose glasses spat on the floor and his beard disappeared into the depths of the hammock. From some other obscure corner of the hold a voice began saying:

"Just think of being able to sit down to eat in some clean restaurant, of being well served, of ordering a nice, cold glass of beer! . . . It is all like some fine dream."

"And do you recall to mind the Iar at Moscow? Alas, we did not know how to appreciate anything, my good friend! It was truly marvelous. Six butlers carried in a sturgeon on a solid silver platter. Then came the brandy in a frost-coated decanter. Next came some delicate pastry and fresh caviar. . . ."

"Ah! Heaven's above us!"

"I can remember the opening night at the new Iar. I received an invitation printed on gilt-edged Bristol paper. I at once slipped into my frock coat and hastened to the place along with Serge Balavinsky—you knew him in Moscow. When we arrived there what do you think we saw? The high dignitaries of the church were receiving extra

service! Plevé, the chief of the armies, was there in the first row, wearing all his decorations. Then there were military men and the leading lawyers and artists, all dressed in frock coats. . . . We began to ask ourselves where we really were! There was a profusion of lowered, plush curtains, flowers, holy images and burning candles. Eight deacons were weeping as if it were the day of final judgment.

"When the Mass had been said, Soudanoff, the land-owner—you remember him, don't you? A man with very weak eyesight—exclaimed: 'I welcome you one and all, my dear friends. Eat, have a good time and make yourselves quite at home. All this'—and he made a sweeping gesture about him—'does not belong to me at all. It all belongs to you and it was built with your own money!' What a wonderful dinner and what excellent champagne we were then offered! . . . And there were fully four hundred guests present. . . ."

"And was all that offered free of charge?"

"Most assuredly it was!"

"Just listen to how wonderful it all was. Good Heavens! And to think that we did not know how to appreciate such a fine life! Think of allowing ourselves to escape from such a land of milk and honey! . . ."

"But that is just what has happened. Now we are steaming along in the hold of a ship and they feed us with beans!"

"No, never will I believe it! Russia can't possibly be lost forever. There are too many noble forces among the people. Bolshevism is but a trying episode—a sort of nightmare."

From another corner of the compartment came the sound of women's voices whispering together.

"What an evil smell there is in here! I can't understand the reason!"

"They say that we won't even be allowed to leave the boat at Constantinople."

"Well, then they will have to take us further on."

"Nobody seems to know anything. There is some talk of our being forced to land on 'Dog Island.'"

"Dog!—did you say? Why so?"

"That is what they are saying. But I am not very well informed. What a terrible trial!"

"And I and my husband were hoping to reach Paris. I have had quite enough of this miserable existence!"

"What is the present fashion in Paris?"

"Short and décolleté."

Ceanionn Ivanovitch left the hold and began jotting down the conversations he had overheard. The vessel was gliding along over the water as if it were soft butter. A gentle spring breeze was blowing across the surface. Most of the passengers were dozing, while only a few remained standing by the deck rail. Once again the colored cook was peeling potatoes near the barrel. Miss Devo, the theosophist, had seated herself near him. While fingering the lace covering of her corsage she was explaining to him all about the passing of the Holy Spirit from Asia into Russia.

The cook was laughing good-humoredly. Ailing children were running about the deck clad in dirty garments. They were playing a game called "emigration." From the deck cabins came the sound of desperate moaning. Assuredly that Infantry Captain's wife had chosen a poor time and a poor place for giving birth to a child! Not far from the kitchen, Cheglov, member of the monarchist's supreme council, had abandoned his reserved manner and was listening to what was being said to him by his friend, a small, phlegmatic man, whose disordered locks of hair were covered by a turned-up cap.

"Pardon me for saying so, but you are nothing but a simpleton in spite of the fact that you are a landowner. I am familiar with the character of the moujik. One must flog them unmercifully if one would have them show you any respect."

"So you are the one they are going to respect, then?" retorted Cheglov.

"Yes, and they do respect me. The landowners have only themselves to blame for what has happened. Just take this, for example: On fête days the landowner sallies forth and amuses himself with the young couples from the little village and he joins with them in their games of "babalaika."

This should not be. Then the plebeian—a mere moujik—asks you for some matches to light his cigarette with, and when a priest chances to pass along the proprietor joins forces with the townspeople to cast ridicule at him. This, too, should not be. Indeed, he should be the very first to take off his hat and so give the others an example of the respect one should pay to religion.”

“What a pity it is that we did not follow your advice sooner.”

“After this, if I should ever return, I will be obeyed.”

“You seem to be quite sure of yourself today.”

“I have been thinking things over all night long,” said the hussar, arranging his cap. “I have grown quite nervous. Today I am going to address the assembly. . . . The monarchist’s Supreme Council is being undermined by liberal ideas . . . consequently I will tell them everything I know. It has now become necessary to fight with sticks, rifles and entire government forces. There is my plan. When we make our re-entry into Moscow we should hang certain types of Chaliapines, Andre Belogos, Alexandre Belogos and Ctanislaus. . . . Such worthless wretches as these are worse than the Bolsheviks. They are the ones who infect all the others.”

Chegllov opened his mouth on account of the heat and also because his stomach was too full. Then he glanced about him like the Dragon of Astrakhan and lightly tapped the calf of his leg with a stick.

“Have you spoken to Priloukov?”

The “Dragon” turned his head around, squinted, turned pale, and, finally, bowed his head.

Ceanionn Ivanovitch was, of course, listening to all this conversation. It did not seem to him that Chegllov’s question had been sufficiently underlined and noted. “Yes, yes,” he said to himself, “Priloukov has already spoken to me about this fellow.” He took out his notebook and jotted down the conversation. “Yes, yes,” he repeated, sucking the end of his pencil. Endowed with an instinct of scepticism and distrust, Ceanionn Ivanovitch sensed that there was something mysterious and disquieting about this conversation.

After this Ceanionn Ivanovitch climbed up to the third deck. The corridors and passageways were littered with bales and boxes. There, they were frankly condemning the Bolsheviks without taking any pains to conceal it. Portly women, fat old ladies, and faded beauties wearing pompous hats and looking very much disgusted with everything, but, nevertheless, quite submissive in their ways, were sitting about directly exposed to the draft. Others were calling in tired voices to their children, who were in constant danger of falling overboard or into the engine room below.

In this gathering no one seemed to place any confidence at all in justice. A small, thickset man, whose cigar ashes had soiled the suit he had just donned so elegantly, was shaking his gray head ironically back and forth. "Why didn't they come forward and frankly declare—We wish to organize a campaign of wholesale robbery? Who knows . . . we might have been able to have reached some mutual understanding. It's not so dreadful after all. . . . I would have placed my money in some British bank and everything would have been quite all right. . . . Ever since 1905 I have been contributing money to the revolutionary cause. Well, now! You see what an absolute idiot I was? Whenever the S. R. would appear I would donate and when the S. D. would come I would also contribute. When the cadets sought funds for their newspaper I would give it to them. The paper was edited by such fools that my head would swim every time I read it. And when they finally organized the revolution they shouted that I had exploited them! A fine state of affairs! And when, in October, they began squabbling among themselves, I had already become a counter-revolutionist, in their estimation."

"Who could have foreseen all this?" responded bitterly his companion, who was also a small and elegantly dressed man. "We had entire confidence in the revolution. We were pure idealists and we had faith in our culture. They demanded three hundred thousand roubles of me; nothing less than pure robbery. No, Russia is nothing but a cattle-breeding center."

"Worse than that—a mad bull."

"A highway robber."

"Worse than that."

"You heard that clearly, Ceanionn Ivanovitch, they said: 'even worse than that.' . . ."

Ceanionn Ivanovitch carefully investigated all the corners and assured himself of the people's good faith on the second deck and then he climbed even higher, hoping to catch a glimpse of the terrible terrorist with his broad-brimmed hat.

The shadows of evening were descending over the Black Sea. Through a haze of gold the steamer was gliding along over the flaming waters towards the perfect sunset.

Ceanionn Ivanovitch remained near the railing. Beneath him the long deck was swarming with the thickset bodies of the passengers, as seen from this perspective. No one wanted them and no one was calling to them. They were sailing on towards the unknown.

Ceanionn Ivanovitch, as we have already shown, considered himself as being only partly Russian. An ironic smile distorted his thin lips. If the deck beneath him had been covered with cattle instead of human beings he would have had a far greater respect for them. "Ah! Men! Men! Nothing but mere confectionery! The herd scatters and moves about uneasily. . . . What earthly good are you with your *karbonamiets*? You are in tatters, you are ill-shaven and your feet are dirty. And it is for such a prize as this that all Europe must hurl itself into the struggle!" Ceanionn Ivanovitch altered the trend of his thoughts. His toes became taut. Then he remembered the lambskins he had in his valise and his uneasiness subsided. . . .

"I beg your pardon, honorable strangers," he murmured, allowing his hands to fall along the seams of his trousers, "I have not come to ask you to raise armies with which to defend the country in which it was my misfortune to have been born; neither do I ask you for money or hospitality. I am traveling as a mere merchant in the best interest of us both. . . ."

He turned his gaze for a moment in the direction of the sunset, that marvelous, gold-tinted region toward which

his destiny was leading him. This wonderful perspective delighted him. Eventually the time would come when he would find some woman who would be very happy indeed that she had made the acquaintance of Ceanionn Ivanovitch. Some day elegant and wealthy men would take the trouble to run across the street in order to shake hands with Ceanionn Nievzoroff. . . .

Ceanionn Ivanovitch again leaned against the railing. It was like a moment of clairvoyance. He contemplated the emigrants who were standing in line or else roaming about among the baskets with their legs spread wide apart.

He caught sight of the figure of an elegant woman. She took off her hat and with a tired motion she pressed her fingers against her temples. Her dress was almost in shreds and her shoes no longer held together.

Further along a tall young girl, dressed in a checkered skirt, was leaning her arms on the balustrade and gazing sadly at the setting sun. She was exceedingly pretty and would have been even more so had she not been wearing that old skirt and camisa with its frayed elbows. . . . "Little kitten, gentle creature that you are, it is quite in vain that you gaze at the wonderful sunset. The golden light is not really of gold, foolish little thing that you are. See! Scoop up the air in your hand and you will find that nothing remains between your fingers. . . ."

And over there one can see a little brunette with vivacious eye. Or, again, there is that little officer's wife who is always laughing. She has a little upturned nose and doll-like eyelashes. And what of that one over there, the proud, flat-footed woman with heavy eyelids. . . . Or this one here, the sugar aristocrat? She is mixing the beans with the fat like the little darkies do. So there are our treasures and gold mines! . . .

A gigantic and unbelievable project surged and quickly took form in his mind. Ceanionn Ivanovitch stiffened himself until his very bones cracked. He said to himself, "During the long, rainy evenings I would stand by the window giving onto Mechtchanckava Street and I would dream—oh, yes, I can recall how I would dream about the balls given by high society, the five o'clock teas of

the smart set, and the perspiration would stand out on my forehead. In my imagination I would kneel in front of the footstools where princesses and countesses lightly placed their feet. . . . I scarcely dared even dream about it all. And now I have been actually thrown among them. . . . But at present I am no longer able to kneel in front of the footstools. I would have to stoop too low . . . and then there are no more footstools. . . . But just you wait awhile, fine ladies!" Ceanionn Ivanovitch lost his breath from pure emotion. "In time everything will be replaced again: the footstools, low décolletés and perfumed eau-de-cologne. Ceanionn Nievzoroff will become a wealthy bourgeois of what was formerly St. Petersburg."

The freshness of the night scarcely cooled the fever of Ceanionn Ivanovitch's thoughts. The putting into execution of this extraordinary project of his was still exceedingly remote and, for the time being, he would have to continue his work of observation. At this moment two men who were seated on the deck got to their feet. It was Cheglov and the "Dragon of Astrakhan." They passed on into the smoking room. Almost immediately three other men, of advanced age, came into view, and a sixth individual—very elegant and wearing a derby hat—hurried up the stairs as fast as he could. He advanced very silently in spite of his heavy shoes. All of them passed on into the smoking room and closed the door after them.

Ceanionn Ivanovitch very cautiously approached the crack in the door. He could see the six members of the monarchists' supreme council sitting about a round table that was littered with cigarette stubs. Cheglov's bulging features were bathed in the light flowing from a lamp minus its protecting shade. His lips were moving, but one was unable to distinguish the words. The members of the council were whispering together and the men were leaning closely over the table in order to hear every word.

A young man with his hat cocked on the side of his head was seated to the right of Cheglov. His expressive, oval face was truly handsome. This virile beauty was enhanced

by the extraordinary blue of his eyes. He was looking full into the light without blinking his eyes. "He must be Priloukov," thought Ceanionn Ivanovitch. "What an awe-inspiring man he is!" Cheglov interrupted the conversation. His companions leaned still closer about the table. Then the blue-eyed young man distinctly declared:

"Why, indeed, should we consider the matter? Have this idiot of a Nievzoroff brought to us here. He happens to be standing just outside the door!"

Ceanionn Ivanovitch rushed towards the stairs. As he ran he threw a hasty glance about him. He caught sight of the form of the mysterious revolutionist standing there with his back against the deck rail. There was a wolfish glare in his dangerous eyes. . . .

Ceanionn Ivanovitch rushed headlong down the stairs until he finally reached the lowest deck. There he concealed himself behind a pile of trunks. "They are aware of everything now. What a narrow escape I have had!" he said sorrowfully, while endeavoring to understand just what had happened. "Where does such grave danger come from and why is it so terrible?" he thought.

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The confusion slowly subsided throughout the whole ship. The coverings were drawn over the various holds. Sad-looking individuals were roaming about looking for some corner in which to sleep. The solitary deacon, seated under the mast, began chanting heart-rending airs.

Becoming bolder Ceanionn Ivanovitch ventured forth from his retreat. He was intrigued by the voices he heard coming from the private study of the Governor Gavrin. Some one was shouting in a loud tone of voice:

"Go to the devil, I tell you! I have no money to give you." After a moment's silence another voice could be heard saying: "Your Highness, I am faced with the spectacle of seeing my wife and my three children, the youngest one has just been born, die from starvation."

"Go to the devil, I tell you!"

"But I am only asking you for an insignificant amount.

... To justify my demand allow me to explain that I have been wounded in several engagements."

"That's your affair. As for me, I represent the Municipal authorities. . . . All of a sudden you fellows appear with your pretended wives. . . . Address your demands to the treasurer of your group. . . You bother me. . . . Go to the devil! . . ."

After a moment the door was slowly reopened and a small man, resembling some toy bear, came out. He stumbled and looked blindly in front of him. His white hair stood up in tufts as if lifted by the starlight. His jacket—bearing the epaulet of a second captain—was made out of a striped woolen blanket. In spite of his military bearing he looked for all the world like some frightened child.

"So! They tell me to go to the devil! But where, indeed, am I to go?" He turned toward Ceanionn Ivanovitch and said, "Must I jump overboard? But I am not alone in the world. I have the responsibility of my family. Alas! . . ." His sigh seemed to escape from the very depths of his grizzly-bear soul and he made his way toward the narrow stairway.

The cabin door had remained ajar. Ceanionn Ivanovitch carefully peeked in. He saw the Governor standing near the table where a candle was flickering. He was a very tall man, clothed in a long, black jacket. He was vigorously rubbing his face with the palms of his hands.

"Fancy not having even five minutes to oneself," he grumbled to some person seated near the wall in front of the burning candle but who was invisible to Nievzoroff. "These good-for-nothing scoundrels have found out that the valuables are in my keeping. But I will only hold myself responsible to the Tzar in person for the sums entrusted to my care."

"And also to the Supreme Council," responded a voice from behind the flickering candle. When he heard this the Governor abruptly ceased rubbing his cheeks. "You have no observations to make, I trust?" continued the voice. "We won't take any note whatever of the expenditures you were called upon to make prior to the evacuation." The Governor struck the floor with his heels. "Being favorably

disposed in your behalf, Highness, I am now going to advise you as to the decisions that were made by the Supreme Council during its recent reunions. In brief, it was decided that we should enlarge our present field of action and use the same weapons against our enemies that they employ against us. . . ."

"Inaugurate a reign of terror!" shouted the Governor, while his cheeks took on the flush of Burgundy wine.

"Exactly!" retorted a sharp, determined voice from beyond the candle. This conversation aroused Ceanionn Ivanovitch to such a degree that he allowed his nose to pass through the space between the door much farther than he should have done. At this moment the Governor wheeled about and grabbed him by the collar and began swearing at him.

Nievzoroff moaned aloud. The person with whom the Governor had been talking rose hastily to his feet and the candlelight fell full upon his features. It was the same handsome, blue-eyed young man who had given Nievzoroff such a terrible scare.

"It serves you quite right," he said. "We two have something we must say to each other." Saying this he caught Ceanionn Ivanovitch by the arm and proceeded to drag him along with him until they had reached the front of the ship, where the sea-sprayed anchor chains were located.

"My name is Priloukov," stated the young man, "and if I do not make a mistake I now have the pleasure of addressing Ceanionn Ivanovitch Nievzoroff, or, according to the passport, 'Simon Navzaraky.'" Without daring to protest, Nievzoroff gulped audibly. "Voluntarily you have rendered great service to the cause of counter spying. In addition to that you were the one who signed the order of execution concerning the Count Chambopen. You have been signaled to us as being a man of great promise."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Priloukov, but I concern myself more directly with commercial affairs. . . ."

"The day will eventually come, my most estimable Ceanionn Ivanovitch, when you will be quite free to devote

yourself entirely to your own personal affairs. But for the time being your life belongs to God, the Tzar and your native land. Come, now, my little father, don't try and object, it is quite useless. . . . To be brief, you must now obey my orders and maintain a deathly silence concerning what I have to say to you. . . . Do you fully understand? Absolute silence! Now let me tell you, my dear fellow, that up until 1917 you were employed in a shipping office. You have also murdered and robbed an English antique dealer. . . . Keep quiet, I tell you! You have changed your name on a number of different occasions. You were also a member of the Angelir band of robbers. . . . All this is quite sufficient to have you strung up at the very first seaport where there happens to be an English commander. . . . Aside from this your name appears on the list of those engaged in counter-spy work and you are, consequently, indirectly under my command. . . . Have you had enough of all these little details? . . ."

"Quite enough!" murmured the very miserable Ceanionn Ivanovitch. He was only able to see the severe eyes looking at him. "Ah! Ibycus," he muttered to himself, and his legs sagged beneath him while his ears began ringing uncomfortably. He continued to listen to the slow and distinct voice addressing him.

"Have you observed the passenger who is quartered on the upper deck? Have you examined him closely? His name is Bourchtein and he is a most dangerous revolutionist. You are to follow him off the ship. You are then to spy on him. When his instinctive caution and mistrust have subsided you are to get him out of the way. You will be provided with a weapon before leaving the ship. I will give you six weeks' time in which to accomplish the mission. If you are arrested we will do everything we possibly can to save you. If you talk too freely we will settle your account for you. Now everything is quite clear? Don't ask any questions. . . ."

Priloukov turned suddenly about and, leaning over the side of the boat, he allowed himself to slide noiselessly down the anchor chains.

Miss Devo, the theosophist, approached Ceanionn Ivan-

ovitch. She was wrapping her blanket about her shoulders.

"Ah! Another brother whose spirit cannot find repose," she said in a deep-toned voice. "I was able to sense your spirit from afar. One is incapable of contemplating the starlit heavens without profound emotion. These stars are our future places of abode. Throughout millions of years we roam from one star to another. My brother, you inspire me with confidence. I want to lift a corner of that veil which hides all this mystery from us. Look over there towards the northern constellation. . . ." The theosophist got to her feet and her blanket fell to the deck as she raised her arms skyward. Utterly helpless, Ceanionn Ivanovitch was compelled to gaze at the stars and listen to the mysterious explanations given by Miss Devo. She dwelt upon the mystery of metempsychosis and on the manner in which men—in other words she and Ceanionn Ivanovitch among them—existed beneath the sun in the form of vegetable life, with their heads down and their feet in the air. Thus it was that Nievzoroff became quite bewildered by all the various and conflicting emotions he had experienced that evening.

On the upper deck one could catch sight of the stooped and motionless silhouette of the revolutionist with his dark, flashing eyes. Only the devil could have told what he was looking at from up there. Was he contemplating the stars, the feeble light thrown by the lanterns, or else the effect produced by the night on the crowded deck of the ocean liner?

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In the morning all the people quartered in the holds of the ship streamed up on deck. The engines had ceased their pounding. The anchors had been lowered.

The tarpaulin, the decks, the trunks, everything was soaked by the heavy fog. The masts were still partially hidden by this dense mist.

But, some distance away to the right and at quite an elevation, one could begin to catch a mere glimpse of orange groves. It was as if they appeared against a screen; flattened out at right angles. The sun was just coming up.

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the annoyance of the passengers on board. Smaller craft, highly varnished and with passageways covered with carpets, had also passed by alongside. Elegant Europeans wearing clean shirts and silk socks were enjoying their outing on the swift-flowing tide. They were gazing about, smoking cigarettes, and appeared to be happy for no special reason at all. They were calling back and forth to each other and pointing out the half-starved, filthy and evil-looking Russian emigrants. When they had had enough of it they would turn around and speed away.

The entire town was bathed in the warm glow of the April sunshine. People were going to and fro about the harbor quite at will. They did not have to ask anybody's permission. And no one was paying the slightest attention to the arrival of these three thousand Russians.

Then a boat load of merchants came alongside and the Turkish vendors would shout, "Russians, Russians, buy shoes and fistula." But the things they offered for sale were of no value at all and the reeds were rotten. Further away came other cries, "Russians, Russians, buy from us; everything is good. . . ."

At three o'clock in the afternoon a panic broke out on board. A group of menacing sailors had taken possession of one of the mounds. They remained there for some time while another group occupied the front of the ship. From the hatchways came the sound of excited voices. The poor officers, pale and disheveled, rushed up from their lower cabins. They were driven back with the butts of the rifles. Then the launch drew alongside the steamer. Finally everything was explained. The volunteers were changing boats in order to return to Novorosysk to join the army of Denikine.

Some of the soldiers were loaded from one ship to the other. Calm was reestablished on deck and the emigrants once more gathered in groups along the deck rail. The town was all astir with feverish life. . . . Smoke was pouring forth from the chimneys and the boats were constantly arriving and departing. The day was wonderfully warm and brilliant.

After five o'clock the colored chef began peeling potatoes

again and the little darkies began opening the cans of preserved monkey flesh. The passengers began to form in irate groups. Dangerous murmurings could be overheard. A petition was signed to the effect that they would refuse all such food. The captain replied that it was too late now as the beans were already cooked but that he would order rice served for the next day's meal. Furthermore, he threatened to raise anchor and steam six miles out into the Black Sea if such disorders should recur.

With the coming of night it was whispered about in the holds that an epidemic of measles had broken out and that the Allies, gravely alarmed, were considering sending the ship away towards the desert sands of Africa. All these emotions served to increase the nervousness of the passengers and none of them were able to sleep at all during the night.

All night long constantly changing lights came to them from the town. The sound of street cars reached their ears and they could even overhear the music played by the orchestras in the main cafés. They were not playing waltz or tango airs but something very similar to them.

In the morning the anchor was raised. The steamer bellowed and glided slowly along the water-front of Constantinople into the Sea of Marmora.

Then the anchor was again lowered, this time quite a distance out to sea, and the utterly desperate passengers looked sadly at the deserted coastline where the outlines of curious battlements could be seen. Nobody entertained any further hopes whatever.

Ceanionn Ivanovitch, like every one else, was profoundly discouraged. He pushed and shoved his way along the bridge deck. He was thinking about the beans they were going to serve and he was raving inwardly. Suddenly a thought came to him and he went upstairs and passed directly in front of the terrible personage on the upper deck. He even had the courage to gaze straight into his smouldering eyes. He found that he was neither alarmed nor frightened.

Later on he gazed bewilderedly at the sad expanse about him. He could see a building, above which floated a

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Later on he gazed bewilderedly at the sad expanse about him. He could see a building, above which floated a

yellow pest flag. This was the place where they quarantined the diseased, the victims of the pest, cholera and typhus patients. Now, no doubt, they would send the Russians there to shiver in the wind. So this was Europe!

Ceanionn Ivanovitch was sad. His heart was heavy within him. There was no longer any hope of escape. Where, indeed, could one flee? Were he to leave the steamer he would not be able to take three steps before being arrested and brought before the British commander. Also he would be strung up after having been denounced by that cursed Priloukov. With no knowledge of either the language or the country it would be the very height of folly.

Ceanionn Ivanovitch recalled to mind everything he had ever heard about the Turks, they who slaughtered the Armenians with curved daggers, impaled those of Orthodox faith and wore long moustaches. Decidedly, one could not forsake one's own people.

"How am I going to kill this demon of a man?" thought Ceanionn Ivanovitch, sighing heavily and turning around to look at the revolutionist in his broad-brimmed hat. "Is it really possible to kill him at all? He is quite able to kill me with a mere twist of his arm. And after all . . . who is to profit by his being killed? The ill humor caused by the beans, the long journey and everything else combined, has induced these monarchists to do away with this man in order to appease their wrath. . . ."

While Nievzoroff was giving vent to these black thoughts the vessel was drawing alongside a small tender. Those who only had small luggage were ordered to disembark at once. A psychological phenomenon then occurred; people refused to go ashore.

Endless discussions arose with the captain. Demagogues demanded that all uphold each other and even threatened to throw overboard any one who dared go on the tender. All the misfortunes previously endured, the diet of beans, the hours passed in the dark hold and two long years under the revolutionists, all these sufferings caused a burst of hysteria among those who were thus constituted. Such an outcry arose that the captain preferred to re-enter his cabin.

Just then Priloukov passed by in front of him, pale and smiling. He gazed severely into Nievzoroff's eyes.

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The Turks had prepared still another disagreeable surprise for them. After having obliged the emigrants to pass beneath the showers they handed back to them their still overheated clothing which had just been taken out of the disinfecting ovens. The naked people began dressing themselves but they were quite unable to slip on their trousers. Everything had shrunk so; their shoes had been baked stiff and the only thing left for them to do was to sit down and weep. Thus, after having been freed of their microbes, the emigrants regained the landing pier, where they were taken in small boats as far as the island of Halky.

Ceanionn Ivanovitch found himself on the same boat along with Liverbosky. The latter was laughing and jesting. He nicknamed Nievzoroff, "Ogly Nevzarok." Ceanionn Ivanovitch sighed heavily and blinked his eyes. They were approaching the lonely island of Halky. Night had already come upon them and little dots of light could be seen coming from the land. Then they were able to distinguish the masts and funnels of the steamship *Caucase*. "Will I at least be able to locate a grave for myself on this lone isle?" thought Nievzoroff to himself. Like all good Russians he had lost all his morale after having been through the hot showers. But the air was quite balmy. The lights were pleasingly reflected in the waters, and, under the influence of the wave of self-pity which swept over him, a sentiment of ambition took life within him. "Everything will finally work out for the best. . . . You will regain your position in the world some fine day. . . . Your wings will unfold and carry you on. . . . Happiness is gently and quietly stealing towards you. . . ."

The small craft drew up alongside of the dock, loaded with baggage, and the passengers were becoming most impatient. "At last we have arrived!" The shore was brilliantly illuminated by huge bulbs.

"Ladies and gentlemen," shouted a man climbing over the piled-up trunks, "what kind of brandy do you possess?"

Your luggage will be delivered to you tomorrow. Now you can go and eat!"

Ceanionn Ivanovitch jumped ashore, drawing in deep breaths and stretching himself. All of a sudden an unreasoning, overwhelming sense of delight took possession of him and he clenched his fists so tightly that his fingernails cut the palms of his hands.

From that evening on he became the hero of most extraordinary and mysterious adventures. . . .

NOTHING LESS THAN EVERY INCH A MAN

By MIGUEL DE UNAMUNO

JULIE'S exceptional beauty was celebrated throughout the entire countryside in the vicinity of the ancient town of Renada; Julie was, so to speak, the town's official gem, an additional monument—fresh and full of life—amid all the architectonic treasures of the capital. "I am going to Renada," people would say, "to visit the cathedral and to see Julie Yañez." An omen of impending tragedy seemed to dwell in the depths of this beautiful woman's eyes. Her bearing filled all those who contemplated her with a kind of uneasiness. The old men lamented when they saw her pass along, claiming all the glances which followed in her wake, and the young men would retire much later than usual on nights when they had seen her. Fully conscious of her power she sensed the weight of a tragic future hanging over her. An intimate, secret voice escaping from the very depths of her conscience seemed to say to her, "Your beauty will be your own undoing!" Accordingly, she sought in every way to ease her mind of this ill omen.

Don Victorino Yañez, the father of this regional beauty, had a rather shady and uncertain previous moral reputation but he had placed all his latest and final hopes of economic redemption in his daughter's care. He interested himself in business affairs, but these were steadily going from bad to worse. His daughter represented his supreme financial hope—the last card left for him to play. He also had one son but it had been a very long time, indeed, since he had known what had become of him and, eventually, he had resigned himself to this loss.

"Julie is all that is left to us now," he was in the habit of saying to his wife. "Everything depends upon the kind of a marriage she makes or the kind of marriage we arrange

for her. We are lost if she makes a foolish mistake and I am very much afraid that she will do this."

"And what do you call making a foolish mistake?"

"There, indeed, is a foolish question. I tell you, Anacleta, that you have hardly any common sense at all. . . ."

"But that is not my fault, Victorino. Inasmuch as you are the only sensible person around here you must advise me."

"Well now, what is needed around here, and I have told you so a hundred times, is for you to watch over Julie and warn her against all these stupid love affairs in which the young girls of this section lose their time, dignity and even their health. Discourage these little dialogues from the windows and these flirtations with inconsequential students."

"But what can I do about all this?"

"Indeed! You can make her understand that our future and that our mutual welfare, even our respect, do you hear me, depends . . ."

"Yes, I understand."

"No, you don't understand it! Our self-respect, do you hear me? The family's honor depends upon her marriage. It is essential for her to make herself highly desirable."

"The poor child!"

3 "The poor child? What is absolutely necessary around here is that she does not throw herself into the arms of a lot of good-for-nothing admirers and for her to give up reading those highly imaginative novels, which only serve to exasperate her dreams and excite her imagination."

"But what do you want me to do about it?"

"We must reason things out calmly and prepare to turn her beauty to good account."

"At her age, I . . ."

"Come now, Anacleta, that's enough foolishness! You only open your mouth to utter nonsensities. You at her age. . . . You at her age. . . . Indeed! You forget that I knew you after . . ."

"Yes, unfortunately. . . ."

The parents of the beautiful girl would suspend their conversation at this point to begin it all over again in precisely the same way the following day.

Poor Julie, thoroughly understanding the horrible significance of her father's calculations, suffered in consequence. "He wishes to barter me," she would say to herself, "in order to save his already compromised business affairs and possibly to keep himself out of jail." And this was the absolute truth.

l { Obedient to an instinct of revolt, Julie accepted the advances of the first admirer chancing along.

"For heaven's sake be careful, my child," said her mother. "I am fully aware of what is going on. I have seen him roaming near the house and making signs to you. I know that he has written you a letter and that you have answered it. . . ."

"What of it, Mother? Must I live like some imprisoned slave until the day arrives when some sultan appears to whom my father can sell me?"

"Don't mention such things as that, my child. . . ."

"Can't I have an admirer in the same way the others have?"

"Certainly, but he must be a worthy one. . . ."

"How is one to know if he is worthy or not? There must be a beginning. We must, first of all, learn to know each other in order to be able to really love one another."

"Love one another . . . love. . . ."

"All right, then, I will have to wait for my purchaser."

"There is nothing to be done, either with your father or with you. The Yañez are all constituted alike. Ah! when I think of the day when I was married. . . ."

"That is just the confession I don't want to have to make some fine day."

Determined to risk everything Julie found the courage to go down to the first floor and to speak to her lover from the window of a sort of little store. "If my father discovers us," she thought to herself, "I don't know what he would be capable of doing to us. But it is better so; in this way people will know that I am victimized and that he wishes to barter my beauty." She took her place at the window and, in this initial interview, she confided to Henri—an aspiring provincial Don Juan—all the distressing moral miseries connected with her home life. He had come with

the intention of saving her and of paying her ransom.

But Henri, in spite of all his admiration for the beautiful damsel, felt his enthusiasm wane. "This little creature," he said to himself, "engenders tragedy; she must devote her time to reading sentimental novels." No sooner had it come to pass that all Renada was aware of how the famous beauty of the locality had permitted him to approach the bars of her window than he began seeking a way out of his compromising situation. It did not take him long to find one. One fine morning Julie came downstairs all in disarray, with her beautiful eyes red from weeping and confided:

"Henri, this situation is no longer bearable. This is no longer a home nor a family but a perfect hell. My father is aware of our affair. Just think, he beat me last night just because I was attempting to justify my conduct!"

"What a brute!"

"You don't know to what an extent he is one. And he says that he is going to talk to you. . . ."

"Let him come! And after that . . ." But to one side he was saying to himself, "This really must cease; this ogre is quite capable of committing some atrocity if he sees that his treasure is about to be carried off, and as I am unable to help him out of his difficulties . . ."

"Henri, do you love me?"

"That's a fine question to ask!"

"Answer me; do you love me?"

"With all my heart and soul, you foolish little girl!"

"Are you quite certain?"

"So very, very certain!"

"Are you ready to do anything for me?"

"Yes, ready to do anything!"

"Well then, carry me away from here. We must escape, but we must go so far away that my father won't be able to reach us."

"Have you considered it all carefully, little girl?"

"No, no, take me away, take me away. If you really love me steal this treasure from my father so that he won't be able to sell it! I don't want to be sold!"

After this they deliberated as to how they should escape.

7 But on the following day—which had been decided upon for the elopement—while Julie, with her little package of personal effects, was holding herself in readiness to depart and impatiently awaiting the arrival of the carriage which had been secretly ordered, Henri had failed to put in his appearance. "Coward that he is! Worse than a coward! How utterly despicable he is!" sobbed poor Julie, throwing herself down on the bed and biting the pillow in her rage. "And he pretended to love me! No, he did not love me; he admired my beauty. Indeed, not even that! His only desire was to be able to boast in front of all Renada that I—Julie Yañez—no one less than I—had accepted him as a fiancé. And now he will tell every one how I offered to run away with him. Oh! the base villain that he is! He is as dastardly as my father; dastardly as are all men!" After this she was overwhelmed by inconsolable despair.

"My child," said her mother, "I see that this affair is over with and I am grateful to God for it. But your father is right; if you continue in this manner you will only bring discredit upon yourself."

"If I continue in what manner?"

"If you continue accepting the advances of the first suitor chancing to make love to you. You will earn the reputation of being a coquette and . . ."

"So much the better, Mother, so much the better. As a result others will not present themselves. Especially so long as I have not lost that with which God created me."

"Alas, alas! You are indeed of the same mold as your father."

Indeed, a short time after this, she accepted another pretender. She confided exactly the same things to him, and frightened him in the same way she had Henri. But Pierre was of stouter heart.

She finally proposed, under identical circumstances, her desire of running away.

"Listen to me, Julie," replied Pierre, "I don't object to our running off together. Quite to the contrary, you know that I would be delighted. But after we have escaped where shall we go and what shall we do?"

"There will be time enough for us to decide all that later."

"No, we can't decide about it then. We must consider it now. As for me, at the present moment and also for some time to come, I won't have enough to support you. I know that they won't accept us at my home and as for your father. . . ."

"What! Do you mean to say that you retract all you have said?"

"But what are we going to do?"

"You aren't going to be a coward are you?"

"Tell me what we will do?"

"Well . . . commit suicide!"

"Julie, you are crazy!"

"Yes, I am crazy; crazy with despair and disgust, crazed with horror at this father of mine who wishes to sell me. . . . And if you were crazy and madly in love with me, you would be ready to commit suicide with me."

"Observe, Julie, that you would like me to be so madly in love with you that I would be willing to commit suicide with you; you do not say that you would kill yourself with me because you are madly in love with me, but, rather, that you are crazed by your disgust for your father and your home. It is not quite the same thing."

"Ah! how well you reason it out! Love doesn't stop to reason!"

They, too, broke off their relationship. Julie repeated to herself, "He did not love me either, any more than the other one did. They are infatuated by my beauty, not me. I defy them all!" After this she would weep bitterly.

"So you see, my child," said her mother, "didn't I tell you so? Still another one!"

"A hundred of them, Mother, a hundred, until I finally find the one intended for me, the one who will deliver me from you both. You whose wish it is to sell me!"

"Tell that to your father."

After saying this Doña Anacleto would go to her own room and cry all by herself.

Eventually her father said to the girl, "Listen to me, my daughter, I have passed by these two love affairs of

yours without resorting to the measures I ought to have taken. But I warn you now that I will not tolerate any more such blunders."

"Well, I have already committed some more blunders," cried Julie in a tone of bitter irony, looking straight into her father's eyes.

"What's that?" the latter exclaimed menacingly.

"I have taken another fiancé."

"Another one! Who?"

"Can't you guess?"

"Don't make fun of me and finish replying. You make me lose all patience."

"Who is it? No less a personage than Don Alberto Menéndez de Cabuérniga."

10 "How dreadful!" exclaimed her mother.

Don Victorino turned pale without his being able to utter one word. Don Alberto Menéndez de Cabuérniga was an exceedingly wealthy landowner, licentious, very capricious in his dealings with women, and it was said of him that he did not hesitate at any expense in order to win them over to him. He was married but separated from his wife. He had already been married on two occasions.

"What have you to say about this, Father?"

"That you are quite mad."

"I am neither crazy nor visionary. He passes by under our windows and wanders all around the house. Am I to tell him that he is to arrange matters with you?"

"I will leave the room; otherwise this interview will end unfortunately."

The father got up and went out.

"Ah! my poor child! My poor child!" moaned her mother.

"Mother, I assure you that already this proposition does not appear to him as being so very terrible; I tell you that he is capable of selling me to Don Alberto."

The poor girl's resistance was wearing itself out. She realized that even a commercial deal could appear as a redemption to her. The essential thing was to be able to leave this house and to escape from her father by no matter what means.

Along about this time an Indian¹, Alexandre Gomez, purchased one of the richest and largest estates on the outskirts of Renada. No one knew very much concerning his origin and no one had ever heard him speak of his parents, his native land or his childhood. The only thing they knew about him was that his parents had taken him to Cuba when he was very young and later on into Mexico, where—and no one knew just how—he had realized an enormous, a fabulous fortune (it was said that it ran into several millions of douros), before he had reached the age of thirty-four, at which time he had returned to Spain with the resolution of settling down there. It was said that he was a widower without issue and the most fantastic legends were told concerning him. Those who went about with him considered him as being ambitious, filled with vast projects and very deliberate, very determined and very self-centered in his ways. He seemed to be very proud of his plebeianism.

"One can go anywhere with money," he would say.

"Not always, and not every one can," people would reply.

"Not every one, no; but those who have been able to make their own money can. Of course one of those inconsequential creatures who inherits his money—a count or a duke made of sugar—is unable to make any progress whatever, in spite of all the millions he might have. But I! I! I who have made my fortune myself by the strength of my arm? I?"

It was quite necessary to hear how he pronounced the word "I." His entire personality was condensed in this personal affirmation.

"I have never failed to realize anything I have set out to accomplish. If I wanted to I could become the Prime Minister of State. But the fact is that I don't wish to."

Alexandre heard people speak of Julie, the most beautiful curiosity in Renada. "We must see that," he said to himself. And after he had seen her he exclaimed, "We must possess it!"

¹ A Spaniard who has made his fortune in America.

One fine day Julie said to her father, "Do you know that this fabulous Alexandre—for a long time now no one has talked about anything else—the man who purchased the Carbajedo estate? . . ."

"Yes, yes, I know. Well, what about him?"

"Do you know that he, too, is hanging around me?"

"Julie, are you trying to make a fool of me?"

"I am quite serious about it."

"I tell you not to make fun of me. . . ."

She drew a letter from her corsage and threw it rudely at her father.

"And what do you propose doing?" he inquired of her.

"Indeed! What is there for me to do? Must I tell him to arrange matters with you and that you will determine as to the amount?"

Don Victorino looked sharply at his daughter and left the room without a word. An ominous silence and an atmosphere of restrained hatred reigned throughout the house for a few days. Julie had sent her latest suitor a letter filled with sarcasms and disdain. Shortly after she received an answer containing the following words heavily underlined and written in large, clear, angular characters: "You will eventually be mine. Alexandre Gomez knows how to win everything he sets out to obtain." While reading this Julie thought, "Here is a real man. Will he save me? Will I save him?" A few days later Don Victorino closeted himself with his daughter and said to her with tears in his eyes and almost falling on his knees before her:

"Listen, my child, everything depends now upon your resolution; all our future and even my honor are at stake. If you refuse to accept Alexandre it will not be long before I shall be unable to conceal my ruin, my various shady transactions and even my . . ."

"Don't tell me."

"No, I will no longer be able to hide anything. The delays accorded me are expiring. They will throw me into prison. Until now I have been able to ward off the blow . . . for your sake and by invoking your name! 'Poor little girl,' they would say."

"And if I accept?"

"I will tell you the entire truth now. He learned all about my situation and is aware of everything. And now, thanks to him, I am quite free and easy. He settled all my dubious accounts and he paid my . . ."

"Yes, I know, don't tell me. But what now?"

"Now I am utterly dependent upon him, we all are; I live upon his generosity and even you, too, are dependent upon him."

"In other words you have already sold me to him?"

"No, he has bought us all."

"Therefore, I belong to him already whether I want to or not?"

"He doesn't exact that. He asks for nothing, demands nothing. . . ."

"What generosity!"

"Julie!"

"That's all right! I understand it all. Tell him that so far as I am concerned he can come whenever he pleases."

As soon as she had uttered these words she began to tremble. Who was it that had really spoken? Her own self? No, rather another being concealed within her and who terrorized her.

"Thank you, my child, thank you!"

The father rose to his feet to embrace his daughter; but she, pushing him aside, cried:

"No, don't soil me!"

"But, my dear child . . ."

"Go and kiss your documents! Or rather the ashes of the ones that would have thrown you into prison."

.

"Julie, didn't I tell you that Alexandre Gomez knows how to win anything he sets out to obtain? Do people try to tell impossible things to me? To me!"

These were the first words with which the young Indian presented himself to Victorino's daughter. The young girl trembled at these words. For the first time in her life she sensed that she was standing before a real man. And

it seemed to her that this man was more docile and less uncouth than she had pictured him to herself.

After the third visit the parents left them alone to themselves. Julie trembled. Alexandre remained silent. For a time this trembling and this silence persisted.

"Julie, you seem to be ill," he said.

"No, no, I am quite all right."

"Why, then, do you tremble so? Because of the cold, perhaps?"

"No, because I am afraid."

"Afraid! Afraid of what? Afraid of me . . .?"

"Why should I be afraid of you?"

"But you are afraid of me."

With this her fright burst its bounds and changed into tears. Julie wept from the very depths of her being—wept with all her heart. Her sobs strangled her and she could not breathe.

"Am I an ogre?" murmured Alexandre.

"They have sold me! They have sold me! They have bartered my loveliness! They have traded me!"

"Who is it that says that?"

"I, I am the one who says so! But it shall not be. I won't give myself to you. I won't belong to you until I am dead."

"You will be mine, Julie; you will give yourself to me and love me. . . . Do you mean that you are not going to love me! Me? That, indeed, would be the very limit!"

The tone in which this "me" was uttered cut short Julie's tears and her heart seemed to stop. And then, as she looked at this man, a voice seemed to say: "This one is a real man."

"You can make whatever use of me you wish," she said.

"What do you mean by that?" he inquired, continuing to address her with familiarity.

"I don't know. . . . I don't know what I mean by that . . ."

"Why do you say that I can do whatever I want with you?"

"Because you really can . . ."

"What I want . . . what I want (and his 'I' sounded clear and triumphant) is to make you my wife."

Julie was unable to suppress a cry. Her immense beautiful eyes shone with terror. She gazed at the man who was smiling and thinking to himself: "I want to have the most beautiful wife in all Spain."

"But what did you think I wanted?" he asked her.

"I thought . . . I thought . . ."

Again she burst into strangling sobs. Then she felt lips pressing against her lips and heard a voice that was saying to her:

"Yes, my wife . . . my own wife . . . all mine . . . my own legitimate wife of course. The law will sanctify my will . . . or my own will the Law!"

"Yes, I belong to you . . ."

She was quite conquered. After this they fixed the date for the wedding.

What was there about this crude and secretive man that frightened her while at the same time he fascinated her? The most terrible thing about it was that he inspired her with a sort of strange love. For Julie really did not want to let herself love this adventurer, who had made up his mind to take as his wife one of the most beautiful of women in order to have her show off his millions. But, although unwilling to love him, she felt herself giving way to a certain form of defeat that resembled a kind of passion. It was akin to that form of love an arrogant conqueror must inspire in the heart of a captured girl-slave. Indeed he had not purchased her but had really conquered her.

"But," said Julie to herself, "does he really love me? Does he love me, really me, as he says (and how he does say it!) Does he really love me for my own self or does he only seek to display my beauty? Is it possible that I mean anything more to him than a rare and very costly piece of furniture? Is he truly in love with me? Won't he become tired of my charms before very long? But he is to be my husband and I will find myself liberated from

this cursed homestead and freed from my father. For my father shall certainly not live with us. We will make him an allowance and he will be able to continue insulting my mother and to carry on his intrigues with the servant girls. We will prevent him from recommencing his questionable dealings. As for me I will be wealthy—enormously wealthy!”

However, she was not thoroughly satisfied. She knew that she was envied by the townspeople; she knew that her unlimited good-fortune was the topic of all conversation and that it was said that her beauty had won for her all that it possibly could. But did this man really love her?

“I must win his love,” she said to herself. “I am in need of his really loving me. I can’t become his wife without his loving me genuinely, for that would be the worst possible kind of a deal. But, indeed, do I really love him?” She felt herself overcome by surprise when she was with him, while a mysterious voice, torn from the very depths of her being, exclaimed: “This is a real man.” Every time Alexandre said “I” she would tremble. She trembled with love although she thought it was for some other reason, or else was totally ignorant as to its cause.

They were married and went to live in the capital. Alexandre had numerous acquaintances and friends, thanks to his large fortune, but they were more or less curious ones. Julie imagined that most of the people who frequented their home—and there were many aristocrats among them—were her husband’s debtors and that the latter advanced them money secured by excellent mortgages. But in truth she knew nothing concerning his affairs, and he never spoke to her about them. There was nothing that Julie did not have; she was able to gratify her every desire. But she longed for just that thing which, indeed, it was likely that she would desire. It was not that she craved the love of this man whom she felt had conquered and even bewitched her, but rather the absolute certainty of his love. “Does he love me or doesn’t he?” she would ask herself. “He showers me with atten-

tions, he treats me with the greatest respect, but a trifle as if I was but a capricious creature; he even spoils me. But in spite of all this—does he really love me?" It was quite impossible to talk about love and sentimental affection with this man.

"Simpletons are the only ones to talk about such things," he would say, adding: "My beautiful one . . . my sweetheart . . . my delight. . . . Fancy talking about such things as this with me! All that is sentimental romance. I know that you used to enjoy reading novels . . ."

"I still like to."

"Then read all you want of them. If it pleases you, I will erect a pavilion on the grounds right next to us, which you can use as a library and I will stock it with all the novels that have ever been written from the time of Adam down to the present day."

"You have a way of saying such prodigious things!"

Alexandre dressed in a most modest and retiring manner. It was not so much that he sought to pass unnoticed because of his attire, but he affected a certain plebeian mannerism. He did not like to change his clothes and preferred those he was accustomed to wearing. One would have said that whenever he donned a new suit he rubbed himself against the walls in order to make it appear shabby. On the other hand, he insisted that his wife should dress herself with the greatest of elegance and in a manner that would show her beauty off to the best advantage. He never considered any expense, but the bills he paid most cheerfully of all were the dressmakers' and modistes' accounts and the fluffy materials for his Julie.

He took pleasure in going out with her in order to attract attention to the difference in the dress and bearing existing between them. It amused him to notice the men stop to glance at his wife, and if she in turn coquettishly provoked their glances, he did not notice it, or rather, he pretended not to. He seemed to be saying to those who looked at her with sensual desire: "She pleases you? I am most delighted, but she belongs to me, only to me, and you can fume all you want to!" She fathomed this sentiment and thought: "Does this man love me or doesn't

he?" For always she thought of him as *this man*—hers. This man whose mistress she had become. Little by little her heart was transformed into the heart of a slave in some harem; a favorite, unique slave—but, nevertheless, nothing more than that.

No intimacy whatever existed between them. She could not imagine what might interest her husband. At times she would risk asking him about his family.

"My family?" Alexandre would reply. "I have at present no other family than just you. My family is me, and you who now belong to me."

"But what of your parents?"

"Say to yourself that I never had any. My family begins with me. I created my own self."

"I wanted to ask you something else, Alexandre, but I don't dare."

"You don't dare? Am I going to devour you? Have I ever taken offense at anything you have said to me?"

"No, never. I don't complain . . ."

"That's fine!"

"I don't complain, but . . ."

"Come now, ask me it and let us have it over with."

"No, I won't ask you about it."

"Question me, I say!"

He had spoken in such a tone and with such absolute egoism that she answered in a voice all atremble with fear and love—the submissive love of a favorite harem-slave:

"Well, then, tell me if you are a widower?"

A slight lowering of the eyebrows passed across Alexandre's brow like some shadow as he replied:

"Yes, I am a widower."

"And what became of your first wife?"

"People have been telling you something."

"Why, no."

"People have been telling you something; what is it?"

"Well, yes, I heard them say . . ."

"And you believed it . . .?"

"No, I didn't believe it."

"Of course you couldn't have—it was your duty not to believe it."

"And I didn't believe it."

"That's quite natural. Whosoever loves me as you love me and who belongs to me as you do is incapable of believing such wild stories."

"It is quite true: I love you . . ."

When saying this she hoped to excite a similar avowal of affection on his part.

"I have already told you that I don't like phrases taken out of sentimental novels. The less we tell any one about our love the better it is."

After a short pause he continued:

"They have told you that I was married in Mexico, when I was very young, to an immensely wealthy woman who was much older than I—an old heiress—and that I obliged her to make me her heir, after which I killed her. That is what they have told you, isn't it?"

"Yes, that is what they told me."

"And did you believe it?"

"No, I didn't believe it. I was unable to believe that you could have killed your wife."

"I see that you still have more sense than I gave you credit for. How was I to kill my own wife—something belonging to me?"

Julie began trembling without realizing that it was because she had heard the term "thing" applied to his first wife.

"Still, there have been husbands who have killed their wives," Julie dared to say.

"For what reason?"

"Because they were jealous or because the wife had been unfaithful . . ."

"Nonsense! Only idiots are jealous because idiots alone permit their wives to be untrue to them. But I! My wife can't possibly deceive me. My first one couldn't betray me and neither can you!"

"Don't talk like that. Let us speak of something else."

"Why?"

"It pains me to hear you say such things. As if it were possible for the idea of deceiving you to enter my brain. Not even in my dreams . . ."

"I know it; I know it without your even telling me so. I know that you will never be untrue to me! Deceive me! My own wife! Impossible! As for her, my first wife, she died without my having killed her."

It was on this occasion that Alexandre had spoken at the greatest length to his wife. She had remained pensive and trembling. Did this man love her or didn't he?

Poor Julie! This new home of hers was quite as terrible as her father's had been. She was free, absolutely free. She was able to live as she pleased, go out and come in at will and also receive both the men and women friends it pleased her to receive. But her lord and master—did he love her? This uncertainty held her a prisoner in this magnificent dungeon with wide-open doors.

A ray of bright morning sunlight penetrated the shadows and storm clouds of her slave-girl soul when she realized that she was pregnant. "At last," she said, "I am going to know if he loves me."

When she announced the great news to her husband he exclaimed:

"That was what I was expecting. Now I have an heir and I will make a man of him—a man like me. I expected him."

"And what if he hadn't come along?" she inquired.

"He simply had to come. A child just had to be born to me;— to me!"

"There are a great many people who marry and who don't have any."

"Perhaps others don't. But not I! It was essential for me to have a child."

"And why so?"

"Because you couldn't do otherwise than bear me a child."

The child was born, but the father remained as unexpansive as ever. He only exacted that his wife should not nurse the boy.

"I don't doubt but that you have sufficient health and strength; but nursing mothers are greatly undermined and

I don't want your health to be affected. I want you to keep yourself young as long as possible."

He only weakened in his decision after the doctor had assured him that Julie—far from being undermined would be benefited by nursing her child and that her beauty would thereby acquire a far greater plenitude.

The father was never willing to embrace his offspring. "One only annoys them with such tender foolishness as this," he would explain. Occasionally he would take him up in his arms and examine him attentively for a long time.

"Didn't you question me once about my family?" said Alexandre one day to his wife. "Well, now, here it is. At present I have a family and some one who will inherit from me and who will carry out my life's work."

Julie was tempted to ask her husband what his life's work was, but she did not dare to. "My life's work!" Indeed, what could the life work of this man be? On still another occasion she heard him express this same sentiment.

Among the people who frequented the house were the Counts of Bordaviella and, especially, that particular Count who was in business relationship with Alexandre and to whom the latter had loaned very important sums at usurers' rates. Often the Count would play out a hand of chess with Julie, who liked this game, and ease his mind by confiding to his friend—his creditor's wife—his unfortunate domestic affairs. For the home life of the Count of Bordaviella was a diminutive hell, without very much flame, however. The Count and Countess did not get along together at all. Neither did they love each other. Both of them devoted themselves to their own interests and she, the Countess, made herself liable to outrageous slander. People had invented for her benefit this little riddle: "Who is the Cyrenene of the Count of Bordaviella?" Thus it was that the Count would go to the home of the beautiful Julie, seeking another's downfall to console him for his own.

"Has the Count been here today too?" demanded Alexandre of his wife.

"The Count . . . the Count . . . what Count do you mean?"

"Come now! The Count! There is only one Count, one Marquis and one Duke. . . . To me they are all as though they were quite equal and formed but one entity."

"Well, yes; he has been here."

"So much the better, if it amuses you. That's the only thing he is good for—the poor fool."

"I think that he is a very intelligent man, cultivated, very correct in his ways and very sympathetic."

"Well, if that interests you . . ."

"And he is so very miserable."

"Bah! That's his own fault."

"Why?"

"Because he's an idiot. All that happens to him is perfectly natural. It is quite natural that a little bungler like this Count should be deceived by his wife. Would you call that a man? I don't know how it happened that any one could be found to marry such a thing as that. Furthermore, she did not marry him—but only his title. I would like to see a woman treat me as this woman treats this miserable creature!"

Julie looked at her husband and suddenly exclaimed, without scarcely realizing what she was saying:

"And what if I should? What if your wife should become to you what this woman has become to him?"

"Nonsense!" and Alexandre burst into laughter. "You are trying to season our domestic life with the salt taken from books. But if you want to put my jealousy to the test you make a mistake. I, I am not one of that kind. Amuse yourself playing with the poor fool."

"Is it possible that this man is quite free from any jealousy?" asked Julie to herself. "Does it not trouble him to see the Count coming to my home and courting me? Is it but confidence that he places in my fidelity and my love? Or is it in his own power over me? Is it mere indifference? Does he or does he not love me?" She began to grow exasperated. Her lord and master was torturing her heart.

The unfortunate woman persisted in trying to provoke

her husband's jealousy as if it were the quickstone of her love; but it was all in vain.

"Do you want to accompany me to the Count's home?" she would inquire.

"What for?"

"To take tea."

"I have no stomach ache. In my time, where I came from, we only took this muddy water when we had a stomach ache. Eat well, and do your best to console the poor Count a little. The Countess will be there also with the elected friend of the day. Fine society, indeed!"

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However, the Count continued to besiege Julie. He pretended to suffer from his domestic misfortunes in order to arouse his friend's compassion and, through her compassion, to lead her into loving him. At the same time he sought to make her understand that he was also aware of the little troubles in her own household.

"Yes, Julie, it is true; my home is a perfect hell. Ah! if we had only known each other sooner! Before I had harnessed myself to my misfortune. And before you . . ."

"And I to mine, you mean to say?"

"No, no, that is not what I meant to say . . ."

"Then, what was it that you intended to say, Count?"

"Before you had given yourself to this man, your husband . . ."

"So you feel certain then that I would have given myself to you?"

"Well, possibly! Possibly! . . ."

"What impertinence! You consider, then, that you are irresistible?"

"Will you allow me to say something to you, Julie?"

"You may say anything you wish."

"It is not I who would have been irresistible, but my love. Yes, my love!"

"You forget that I am in love with my husband . . ."

"Oh! as to that . . ."

"Do you take the liberty of doubting it? Yes, I am

in love, just as I tell you I am—sincerely in love with my husband . . .”

“But—as for him . . .”

“What do you mean? Who has told you he doesn’t love me?”

“You yourself.”

“I? When did I tell you that Alexandre does not love me?”

“You have told me so with your eyes, your gestures and your general attitude . . .”

“Take care, Count, that this visit does not become the last one you will have made here.”

“For pity’s sake, Julie, let me come and visit you in silence. Just let me look at you and let me dry, in beholding you, the tears I shed within me. . . .”

“How eloquent!”

“And as that which I said to you that appeared to offend you so . . .”

“That appeared to? That did offend me . . .”

“Is it really possible for me to offend you? I only said one thing to you: That if we had only met—I, before I had delivered myself into my wife’s hands and you into your husband’s, I would have loved you with the same intensity as I love you now. Allow me to bare my heart to you! My love would have won your love. Julie, I am not one of those men who seek to conquer and dominate a woman by the individual merit, and who—in spite of all they are—demand that they be loved without giving their affection in return. You won’t find such pride as this in my make-up.”

Julie felt that she was being slowly poisoned.

“There are some men,” continued the Count, “who are incapable of loving but who demand that they be loved and who think they have the right to the absolute affection and fidelity of the poor woman who has abandoned herself completely. They select a woman who is famous for her beauty in order to glorify themselves and lead her along beside them like some tame lioness. ‘Look at my lioness,’ they exclaim; ‘do you see how she has given in to me?’”

Count, Count! You are entering upon a topic . . .”

The Count of Bordaviella drew nearer and, blowing his trembling breath against the beautiful pink shell hiding itself amid the shimmering locks of auburn hair, he whispered almost in Julie's ear:

“Julie, it is into your conscience that I am penetrating.”

Such familiarity of speech caused the guilty ear to blush.

Julie's bosom rose and fell like the ocean at the approach of a storm.

“Leave me alone, for Heaven's sake leave me alone! What if he should come in!”

“He won't come in. He is not interested in anything you do. If he leaves you all alone like this it is because he does not love you. . . . No, no, he doesn't love you, he doesn't love you, Julie, he doesn't love you!”

“It is because he has absolute confidence in me . . .”

“In you? No, in himself. He has an absolute, blind faith in himself! He thinks that he—because he is what he is—Alexandre Gomez—the man who has made his own fortune—I don't want to say how—he does not believe it possible for a woman to deceive him. As for me, I know very well that he scorns me . . .”

“Yes, he scorns you . . .”

“I knew it! But he scorns you just as much as he scorns me.”

“For Heaven's sake keep quiet. You are killing me . . .”

“He is the one who will kill you—he—your husband. And you won't have been the first one, either!”

“That is an infamy, Count—an infamy! Go away from here; go away from here and don't ever return!”

“I'll leave, but I shall come back. Some day you will speak tenderly to me.”

With this he took his departure, leaving her wounded to the very heart.

“Will this man have said the truth?” she asked of herself. “Will this really come to pass? He revealed to me that which I did not even wish to confess to myself. Can it be true that he scorns me? Can it be true that he does not love me?”

Rumors were beginning to be spread around concerning Julie's relations with the Count of Bordaviella. Alexandre didn't hear anything of them, or else he pretended not to. He cut short the veiled insinuations which a friend had started making to him by saying: "I know what you are going to tell me. Desist; these tales are but idle gossip. One must let romantic women make themselves interesting." Did he say this because he was a coward?

But one day at the Casino when some one in front of him had taken the liberty of making a double-meaning jest about crests, he picked up a bottle and hurled it at the man's head. A terrible scandal had resulted.

"Can such idiotic jokes as this be confided to me? To me!" he exclaimed in his most modulated tone of voice. "As if I did not realize their significance! As if I wasn't aware of the foolish things being passed around, among the fools, concerning my poor wife's romantic whims! I am determined to tear these unfounded stories up by the roots . . ."

"But not in such a manner as this, Don Alexandro," some one found the courage to say to him.

"Then tell me in what manner."

"You would do better to destroy the cause of the tales."

"Ah! indeed. By closing my door to the Count?"

"That would be the wiser course."

"But that would be justifying the slanderers. Besides I am not a tyrant. If this puppet of a Count amuses my poor wife, am I going to deprive her of the distraction afforded by this absolute idiot who is—I swear it to you—a thorough simpleton, an inoffensive nonentity who seeks to play the rôle of a Don Juan—merely because other fools will say this and that about it? Come now! Fancy making fun of me! Of me! You utterly fail to understand me."

"But Don Alexandro—what of appearances . . .?"

"Realities and not appearances enable me to live."

The following day two very serious-looking gentlemen presented themselves at Alexandre's home to demand satisfaction from him in the name of the insulted man.

"Tell him," he said to them, "to send me his doctor's

or his surgeon's bill; I will settle it as well as whatever other damages there may be."

"But Don Alexandro . . ."

"What do you wish?"

"We ask nothing. But the offended party demands reparation . . . some satisfaction . . . an honorable explanation . . ."

"I don't understand you . . . or rather I don't wish to understand."

"Well then, it means a duel."

"Very well. Whenever he wishes. But it is quite unnecessary for you to bother about arrangements. We have no need of witnesses. Just tell him that he can notify me when his head has cleared—I mean when he has recovered from the blow he received from the bottle; we will go anywhere he wishes, lock ourselves in a room and settle this affair properly with our bare fists. I agree to no other weapons than these. He will find out what Alexandre Gomez is."

"But you are making fun of us," cried one of the witnesses.

"Not at all. You represent one grade of society and I another. You come down from illustrious fathers—from aristocratic lineage. . . . As for me I have only the one family I have made for myself. I come down from nothing at all and I don't wish to hear about such hypocrisies as a code of honor. I have warned you."

The witnesses rose to their feet and one of them—very gravely and with a certain amount of energy, but not wholly disrespectfully (for after all this person was an influential millionaire and a man of mysterious birth), exclaimed:

"In this case, Señor Don Alexandro Gomez, allow me to remark . . ."

"Say anything you want to, but measure your words for I have another bottle handy."

"Under the circumstances, Señor Don Alexandro Gomez," he cried, lifting his voice, "you are not a true gentleman."

"Of course not; of course I'm not a gentleman. Mel Since when? Come, come, now . . ."

"Yes, let us depart," said the other witness, "we have nothing further to do here. And as for you, Señor Don Alexandro, you will have to accept the consequences of your unqualifiable conduct."

"Most assuredly; that is what I expect. And as for this—this gentleman with a too waggy tongue whose skull I have fractured—tell him, I repeat it, to send me the doctor's bill and to be careful in the future as to what he says. As for you two—and anything can come to pass—if some day you find yourselves in need of this savage and disqualified millionaire who has no code of honor, you can turn to me for assistance and I will serve your interests as I have served and still do serve those of other gentlemen."

"This situation is no longer bearable! Let us leave!"

With these words the witnesses took their departure.

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That same night Alexandre told his wife about the scene he had had with the two witnesses, after having explained to her about the affair of the thrown bottle. He amused himself greatly in telling about his adventure. Terrified, she listened to what he had to say.

"Mel—a gentleman! Alexandre Gomez! Never! I am only a man, but a real one—nothing less than every inch a man."

"And what about me?" she retorted, in order to say something.

"You? You are a real woman. A real woman who reads novels. And the little Count of your games of chess—is a nobody, less than a nobody. Why should I forbid you to amuse yourself with him any more than with a little muff-dog. If you were to purchase one of those little fuzzy dogs, an angora or a little pet monkey and you were to pet and kiss it—would I then take the little dog, cat or pet monkey and throw it out of the window? That would be a clever thing to do and all the more so as it might fall on the head of some passer-by!"

"But, Alexandre, they are justified in what they say; you must close your house to this man . . ."

"This man, you say?"

"As you like it. But you should close your door to the Count of Bordaviella."

"That's your affair. If you don't do so it will be because he has not succeeded in winning your heart. Indeed, if you had begun to interest yourself in him you would have sent him away in order to have protected yourself from the danger."

"And what if I had begun to take an interest in him?"

"I thought so! Here we are back at the same point again. You want to make me jealous. Me! When will you realize that I am not like other men?"

As time passed Julie understood her husband less and less, but he fascinated her more and more and she felt more anxious than ever to know if he really loved her or not. On the other hand, Alexandre—although he felt fully reassured as to his wife's fidelity or rather of the impossibility of his wife—the wife of Alexandre!—deceiving him, he who was nothing less than a real man!—began to say to himself: "This life here in the capital and all these novels she reads is turning my poor little lady's head." He therefore decided to take her away to the country and they departed for one of their estates.

"A short stay in the country will do you a lot of good," he said to her. "It calms one's nerves. Furthermore, if you are afraid of being bored without having your little monkey you can invite him to accompany us."

But poor Julie's anxiety only increased there in the country. She was frightfully bored. Her husband wouldn't allow her to do any reading.

"I brought you here to take you away from your books and to cure you of your melancholia before it became more pronounced."

"My melancholia?"

"Assuredly! You are all wrapped up in melancholy thoughts. It comes from the books you read."

"Then I will never read any more of them again."

"I don't ask as much as that of you. . . . I demand nothing. Am I a tyrant? Have I ever demanded anything of you?"

"No, you don't even ask me to love you."

"Of course not. That's something it would be impossible to demand! Furthermore, I know that you love me and that it is impossible for you to love any one else. . . . Since you have learned to understand me and that you know—thanks to me—what a real man is like, you are quite incapable of loving another man even if you forced yourself to. But enough of this romantic talk. I have told you that I don't like it. It is but idle talk just good enough to serve as a topic of conversation with little Counts over the tea table."

Julie's endless martyrdom increased when she discovered that her husband was concerned in a common love affair with an uncouth servant girl who was not even pretty. One night when they were alone together after dinner, Julie suddenly said to him:

"Don't think, Alexandre, that I have not noticed your affair with Simone . . ."

"I have not tried in the least to conceal it. But it is of no importance. Even the finest dish . . ."

"What do you mean by that?"

"That you are much too lovely to have every day."

His wife trembled. It was the first time that her husband had ever referred to her as just lovely. Could he possibly love her?

"But," said Julie, "with such a common brat as this!"

"Why certainly. Her very squalor amuses me. Don't forget that I was brought up in a sort of pig pen and that I am fairly susceptible to what one of my friends calls a passion for lowly things. After a taste of this little rustic appetizer I will appreciate all the more your own beauty, elegance and refinement."

"I hardly know if you are flattering or insulting me."

"There now! Your melancholia again! And I had thought that you were improving!"

"Of course—you men, you can gratify your every whim and deceive us . . ."

"Who has deceived you? Do you call that deceiving you? Bah! Books . . . books! I wouldn't give a pin for Simone . . ."

"Of course not. She is nothing more than a little puppy, a little kitten or a pet monkey to you!"

"Yes—a pet monkey, that's it. Nothing more than a pet monkey! That's what she resembles the most! You certainly named her well: a monkey! But does that mean that I have ceased to be your husband?"

"You mean that I have not ceased to be your wife because of this affair . . ."

"You see, Julie, you are improving . . ."

"One acquires everything in time."

"With me, I imagine, and not with your little pet monkey."

"Of course—with you."

"Good. I can't believe that this little rustic love affair is going to make you jealous. You—made jealous! My wife! And because of this she-monkey? As for her—I give her a dot and bid her good-riddance."

"Of course—when one is wealthy . . ."

"And with this dot she will get married in a jiffy and present her husband with a boy along with her dot. And should the boy resemble his father—who is nothing less than every inch a man—it will be a double gain for the fiancé."

"Keep still! Keep still!" and poor Julie burst into tears.

"I thought," concluded Alexandre, "that the country life had cured you of your melancholia. Take care that it doesn't get any worse!"

Two days later they returned to their city residence.

Julie's life of constant, painful uncertainty resumed its course and the Count of Bordaviella resumed his visits although with greater prudence than before. It was finally Julie who, exasperated, began paying attention to the venomous insinuations of her friend and especially to display this friendship of hers before her husband's eyes.

From time to time he contented himself with saying: "We will have to return to the country and place you under careful treatment."

One day, exasperated beyond all endurance, Julie rushed at her husband and cried:

"You're not a real man, Alexandre, no; you're not a real man!"

"What's that! Me? And why not?"

"No, you're not a real man."

"Explain yourself."

"I know now that you don't love me, that nothing concerning me interests you, that I am not even precious to you for being the mother of your child and that you only married me out of vanity in order to exhibit me and take pride in my beauty and . . ."

"I thought so! More literature. Why am I not a real man?"

"Now I know that you don't love me."

"I have told you a hundred times that all this talk about loving and not loving is only good for conversation over some Count's tea table."

"I know that you don't love me."

"Well, and what then?"

"But that you are willing for the Count—the monkey as you call him—to enter here whenever he pleases . . ."

"You are the one who consents to this."

"And why indeed should I not consent if he is my lover? Do you hear me? He is my lover."

Alexandre remained impassive and considered his wife. The latter expecting an outburst of rage, became more excited than ever and shouted at him:

"Well then! Aren't you going to kill me now as you killed the other woman?"

"It is not true that I killed the other woman and it is equally untrue that this monkey is your lover. You are lying to me in order to stir me up. You want to make an Othello out of me and my home is not a theater. Furthermore, if you continue in this manner you will soon be finished, for you will become insane and it will become necessary for us to shut you up."

"Insane? Me—insane!"

"Violently so. Fancy reaching the point where she believes she has a lover! That is to say—trying to make me believe it! But you won't succeed in your ambition, which is to have me tickle your ears with story-book words and expressions suitable only for the Count's tea table conversations. My home is not a theater."

"Coward, coward, coward that you are!" screamed Julie, quite beyond herself.

"It will soon be necessary for us to take special precautions," retorted her husband.

Two days after this scene, during which he had kept his wife under lock and key, Alexandre summoned his wife to his study. Utterly demoralized, poor Julie obeyed the summons. She found her husband awaiting her there with the Count of Bordaviella and two other gentlemen.

"Listen, Julie," said Alexandre with terrible calm, "these two gentlemen are two alienists who have come here at my request to examine your case in order that we will be able to give you the proper treatment. You are not very well mentally; doubtlessly you are aware of this during your moments of lucidity."

"And what are you doing here, my dear Jean?" inquired Julie, without noticing her husband.

"You see?" exclaimed the latter, turning toward the doctors. "She persists in her hallucination. She obstinately continues to imagine that this gentleman is . . ."

"Yes, he is my lover!" she broke in. "If it is not true, then let him deny it."

The Count looked fixedly at the floor.

"You see, Count, how she persists in her madness," said Alexandre to Bordaviella. "Indeed you have never had—you could not have had any relationship of this nature with my wife . . ."

"Assuredly not!" cried the Count.

"You see how it is?" continued Alexandre, addressing the doctors.

"Is it possible that you, too, Jean, you, too, dare deny that I have belonged to you?" cried Julie.

The Count trembled beneath the cold glance thrown at him by Alexandre. He replied:

"Control yourself, Madame. You know quite well that nothing of all this is true. You know that if I frequented this house that it was solely as your friend, Madame, and as a friend of your husband, and also that I, a Count of Bordaviella, could never have offended a friend such as . . ."

"Such a friend as me," interrupted Alexandre. "Me! Me? Alexandre Gomez! There is no Count living who can offend me any more than can my wife possibly betray me. You see, gentlemen, that the unfortunate woman is quite insane."

"And you, too, Jean!" she cried. "Coward—coward that you are!"

She was overcome by a nervous fit and fainted away.

"And now, my dear sir," said Alexandre to the Count, "we will leave the room and allow these two excellent doctors to finish their consultation."

The Count followed him. When they were out of the room Alexandre said to him:

"It is thoroughly understood then, Count, that either my wife is declared insane or I will split your head—yours and hers too. It is up to you to decide."

"The thing for me to do is to repay you all I owe in order to have no further dealings with you."

"What you owe me is to keep your mouth shut. Therefore we come to the decision that my wife is raging crazy and that you are the worst of idiots. Also—beware of this!" and he drew forth a revolver.

When, a few minutes later, the two alienists left Alexandre's study, they said to each other:

"This is a horrible tragedy. What are we going to do?"

"What is there that we can do other than to declare her insane? Otherwise this man will kill her as well as the poor Count."

"But what of our professional duty?"

"Our duty in this instance consists in preventing a greater crime."

"Would it not be better were we to declare this man crazy?"

"He is not insane; it is something else with him."

"'Nothing less than every inch a man'—as he says."

"Poor woman! It was horrible to listen to her. What I fear is that she will finally wind up by really going crazy. However, possibly by declaring her as such we will be able to save her. In all events we will get her away from this house."

Consequently they did declare her as being insane, and, on the strength of this declaration, her husband had her interned in a sanatorium.

When Julie found herself a prisoner in this sanatorium, a dense, melancholy, barren cloud of desperation seemed to settle over her. The unique consolation accorded her was that they brought her child to her almost every day. She would gather him in her arms and bathe his little face in her tears. And the poor little thing, although it did not understand, would cry with her too.

"Ah! my baby, my little baby!" she would say to him, "if I could only drain you of all your father's blood! For he really is your father!"

And, quite solitary as she was, the poor woman feeling herself to be on the very verge of insanity, would say to herself: "But won't I end up by really going mad in this place and in convincing myself that my entire affair with this infamous Count was merely a dream and an hallucination? Ah! the coward, yes, the coward that he is! To think of his abandoning me in this manner and allowing me to be confined in this place! Oh! the little monkey—the little monkey! How true this is! And why is it that Alexandre did not kill us both? But this vengeance of his is even more terrible! Why should he kill this cowardly monkey! No, indeed, far better to humiliate him and to force him to lie and abandon me. He trembled in my husband's presence;—he trembled before him. It

is because my husband is a real man! And why did he not kill me? Othello would have killed me! But Alexandre is not an Othello; he is not such a brute as Othello was. Othello was an impetuous Moor—but he was not very clever. Alexandre combines a powerful mind with an infernal plebeian pride. Indeed this man had no need of killing his first wife; he merely obliged her to die. He caused her to succumb from pure fright at his presence. And me . . . ? Does he really love me?"

Thus it was that there, in this madhouse, she began once more to wring her heart and stir up her mind with the torturing dilemma: "Does he love me—or doesn't he?" Then she would say to herself: "As for me—I love him blindly!"

Finally, so as not to really go crazy, she pretended that she was cured by assuring them that her love affair with Bordaviella had only been an hallucination. Her husband was then informed about this.

One fine day they summoned Julie to the parlor where her husband was waiting for her. She threw herself at his feet, sobbing out:

"Forgive me, Alexandre, forgive me!"

"Get up, Julie," he said, assisting her to her feet.

"Forgive me!"

"Forgive you? Forgive you for what? They told me that you were cured and that you did not have any more of these hallucinations . . ."

Julie observed with terror her husband's cold and penetrating glance. She felt herself overcome by a blind, unreasoning love mingled with an equally blind terror.

"You are quite right about it, Alexandre, you are quite right. I have been quite crazy—absolutely crazy. And to make you jealous—just to make you jealous, I invented all these stories. But they were nothing but lies. Indeed, how could I have deceived you! Tell me that you believe me now!"

"One day, Julie, you asked me if it were true that I had killed my first wife," said her husband in an icy tone of voice, "and I in turn asked you if you could believe it. What was it that you replied?"

"That I did not believe it; that it was impossible for me to believe it."

"Well, then, I now say to you that I have never believed—that I could not believe that you had given yourself to this little monkey. Does this suffice?"

She began trembling, feeling herself to be on the brink of insanity. It was a madness composed of horror and love combined.

"But now," added the poor woman, kissing her husband and whispering into his ear, "now, Alexandre, do tell me—do you love me?"

It was then that she observed in him for the very first time something that she had never seen before: she uncovered the terrible and hermetically closed inner soul which this wealthy, self-made man had kept jealously concealed. It was as though a flash of dangerous light had illuminated for an instant the mysterious lake of this lone soul and had caused its surface to shimmer. It was because two teardrops had appeared in the cold and dagger-like piercing eyes of this man. Then he fairly shouted at her:

"Do I love you, my dear child—do I love you! I love you with all my soul, with my very blood and with everything that is in me. I love you more than my very life! At first when we were married I didn't. But now? Now I love you blindly—insanely. I belong more to you than you do to me."

Then, kissing her with an animal-like fury—feverishly, deliriously—like some madman, he exclaimed brokenly: "Julie! Julie!—my divinity—my all!"

She thought that she would go mad at the sight of her husband's naked soul.

"It is at this moment, Alexandre, that I would like to die," she murmured in his ear, letting her head fall on his shoulder.

At these words the man seemed to arouse himself and shake himself from a dream; and, as if his eyes—which were again cold and piercing—had swallowed their own tears—he said:

"Nothing has happened at all, Julie. Is this not true?"

You know everything now; but I did not make the confession I made. . . . Forget it."

"Forget it?"

"All right, remember it then, but do so as if you had never heard it!"

"I will keep it to myself."

"You can repeat it to your own self."

"I will keep it to myself, but . . ."

"That will be enough."

"But in the name of Heaven, Alexandre, let me continue for a moment . . . only one moment. . . . Do you love me for my own self, just for what I am, even if I did belong to another man? Or is it just because I am something that belongs to you?"

"I have told you that you must forget what I said to you. If you insist any more I shall have to leave you here. I have come to take you away but you must leave here fully cured."

"And I really am cured!" his wife affirmed in an outburst of feeling.

After this Alexandre took her back to his home with him.

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A few days after Julie's liberation from the sanatorium the Count of Bordaviella received from Alexandre what was not only an invitation but a command as well, ordering him to come and take dinner with him. The letter stated:

"As you know, my dear Count, my wife has left the sanatorium completely cured; and as the unfortunate woman offended you gravely during her delirium—although without any desire to distress you—by suggesting that you were capable of committing an infamy of which, being the perfect gentleman that you are, you were, of course, utterly incapable; I invite you to take dinner with us on Thursday next, for I very much desire to give to such a gentleman as you the full satisfaction that you are entitled to. My wife begs you to come and I demand that

you do. For in the event that you should not come on this stated occasion to receive these apologies and explanations you will suffer the consequences. Moreover, you know what I am capable of doing.

“ALEXANDRE GOMEZ.”

The Count of Bordaviella accepted the invitation and appeared at the house, pale, trembling and quite overcome. The dinner was passed in the most depressing conversations. They conversed about innumerable frivolities—in the presence of the servants—and among these were the most suggestive and rash of Alexandre's jokes. Julie seconded her husband. After the dessert course Alexandre turned to a servant and ordered: “Bring in the tea.”

“Tea!” the Count dared exclaim.

“Why certainly, my dear Count,” replied the master of the house. “Not that I have a stomach ache, no, but merely to observe the proper custom. Tea is quite suitable to explanations between perfect gentlemen . . .”

Then he turned to the servant and said: “You may leave us now.”

The three of them were left to themselves. The Count was trembling. He did not dare to taste the tea.

“Serve me first, Julie,” said her husband. “I will drink first, Count, so as to show you that one can take tea in my house with entire confidence.”

“But I . . .”

“No, Count; although I am not a real gentleman, or even less than that, I have not fallen to such procedures as this. And now my wife will offer you a few explanations.”

Alexandre glanced at Julie, and she, very slowly, began speaking in a ghostly tone of voice. She was gloriously beautiful. Her eyes scintillated. Her words flowed forth coldly and evenly but one could fathom that a devouring flame was burning beneath them:

“I had my husband invite you here, Count,” Julie began by saying, “because I owe you an explanation for having gravely offended you.”

"Me, Julie¹?"

"Don't call me Julie. Yes, you. When I first went mad—when I became madly in love with my husband and was constantly endeavoring to find out if he really loved me or not, I attempted to make use of you in order to arouse his jealousy and—due to my madness—I was led to accuse you of having seduced me. This was a lie and it would have been but pure infamy on my part had I not been insane. Is this not true, Count?"

"Indeed, indeed, Doña Julia . . ."

"Madame de Gomez," corrected Alexandre.

"You must forgive us for what I accused you of at the time when I and my husband called you the 'little monkey.'"

"I excuse you."

"The deed of which I accused you at that time was a low and infamous act, quite unworthy of such a gentleman as you."

"That's well put," added Alexandre, "very well put. 'A low and infamous act unworthy of a gentleman.'"

"I repeat it again—even although I can and really should be excused on account of my condition at that time, I nevertheless ask your pardon. Do you give it to me?"

"Yes, yes, I extend it to you, Madame; I extend it to you both," groaned the Count, more dead than alive, and anxious to escape as soon as possible from this house.

"To us both?" interrupted Alexandre. "You have no pardon to extend to me."

"That's true . . . quite true!"

"Come now, calm yourself," said the husband. "I see that you are greatly affected. Take another cup of tea. Julie, serve the Count. Would you like to have a bit of linden-tree juice added to it?"

"No, no . . ."

"Well, now that my wife has told you what she had to say to you, and that you have forgiven her for her madness, there only remains for me to beg you to be kind enough to honor our house with your visits. After what

¹ It is quite a common occurrence in Spain to address a woman by her first name.

has occurred you will certainly understand that it would be very bad taste indeed were we to sever our relationship. Now that my wife—thanks to the care I have given her—is completely cured, you run no further risk in coming to this house. And to prove to you the confidence I have in the complete recovery of my wife, I am going to leave the two of you to yourselves in the event that she might have something to say to you which she does not dare mention in front of me, or that I, by politeness, do not wish to hear expressed.”

Alexandre left the room, leaving them facing each other and equally surprised by his conduct.

“What a man!” thought the Count.

“There, indeed, is a real man!” said Julie to herself.

A crushing silence followed his departure. Julie and the Count did not dare to look at each other. Borda-viella glanced at the door through which the husband had passed.

“Don’t look at the door that way,” said Julie. “You don’t know my husband. He is not hiding behind the door to overhear what we are saying.”

“How do I know he’s not? He is capable of having brought witnesses along.”

“Why do you say that, Count?”

“Do you think that I have forgotten the day when he brought two doctors along to take part in that scene in which he humiliated me as much as he possibly could and committed the crime of having you declared insane!”

“But it was the truth. If I had not been mad at the time I would never have said, as I did, that you were my lover.”

“But . . .”

“But what . . . Count!”

“Is it me that you want to declare insane? Do you mean to say, Julie, that you deny . . .!”

“Doña Julia, or Madame de Gomez if you please!”

“Do you mean to say, Madame de Gomez, that, for one reason or another, you did not eventually accept my advances . . . not alone my advances—but my love?”

“Count!”

"That you finally not only accepted them but became the party who encouraged them and that . . ."

"I have told you, Count, that I was insane. Must I continue repeating this?"

"Do you deny that I was your lover?"

"I repeat to you again that I was insane."

"It is quite impossible for me to remain another instant in this house! Farewell!"

The Count held out his hand to Julie, fearing that she would refuse it. But she took it in hers and said to him:

"So you are aware of what my husband said? You can come here whenever you so desire . . ."

"But, Julie!"

"What! Are you going to begin again? Inasmuch as I tell you that I was insane . . ."

"I am the one you and your husband are going to drive crazy . . ."

"You? Drive you crazy! That doesn't strike me as being an easy thing to do . . ."

"But it is a fact! You call me 'little monkey'!"

Julie burst out laughing. Ashamed and furious, the Count left the house with the firm resolution of never returning.

All these upheavals shattered poor Julie's life and she became seriously ill; mentally deranged. It was then that she seemed to be really going mad. She was frequently overcome by spells of feverish delirium during which she would call for her husband in the most ardent and passionate terms. The man would abandon himself to the painful outbursts of his wife and do his utmost to calm her. "I am yours, yours, all yours," he would repeat to her in her ear while she, suspended to his neck, would fairly strangle him in her hold.

He took her away to one of his estates, hoping that the country life would benefit her. But the disease was slowly killing her. The terrible malady had entered the very depths of her being.

When this wealthy man finally realized that death was

going to snatch his wife from him he was overcome by a terribly calm and obstinate fury. He summoned the very finest doctors. "All is hopeless," they would say to him.

"Save her for me," he would say to the doctor.

"It is quite impossible, Don Alexandro, quite impossible."

"Save her, I tell you! I will sacrifice all my wealth, all my millions to save her life!"

"It is impossible, Don Alexandro."

"Then I will give my life for hers! Are you not able to make a blood transfusion? Take all mine and give it to her. Come now, drain all my blood from me."

"It is impossible, Don Alexandro, quite impossible."

"What do you mean—impossible? I will give all my blood for her, I say!"

"God alone can save her."

"God! Where is God? I have never thought of Him."

Then turning towards Julie—his wife—who was frightfully pale but more beautiful than ever—beautiful with the beauty of imminent death—he would say to her:

"Julie—where is God?" She would then motion with her immense, blank-staring eyes which seemed to say:

"He is there . . ."

Alexandre examined the crucifix suspended at the head of the bed. Then taking it down and crushing it in his fist he would exclaim: "Save her for me and exact of me my entire fortune, all my blood . . . everything that is in me . . ." Julie would look at him and smile. Her husband's blind fury filled her soul with a very tender light. At last she was really happy! How had she ever been able to doubt that this man loved her?

Life was flowing from her little by little. She was turning cold and marmoreal. Then the husband lay down close beside her and kissed her passionately. He wanted to communicate all his warmth to her—the warmth she was allowing to leave her body. He wanted to give her his very breath. He was like a man who had gone quite mad. And always she kept on smiling at him.

"I am dying, Alexandre, I am dying."

"No, you are not dying," he would say to her. "You can't possibly die."

"It isn't possible for your wife to die, is it?"

"No, my wife can't die. I would rather die myself. Come now, let death approach. For me! Let death come to me! Let it come!"

"Ah! I know now that I have not suffered in vain! And to think that I doubted your love!"

"No, I did not love you. I have told you a thousand times, Julie, that these foolish love-words are nothing but literary rubbish. No, I did not love you! Love, love! And to think that all these wretches, these cowards who talk about love, allow their wives to die! No, that is not love. I don't love you . . ."

"What is that you say?" she demanded in her faintest voice, seized again by her former dread.

"No, I don't love you . . . I . . . There's no suitable term!" Then he broke into long, tearless sobbing which resembled a death sigh. It was an agonizing moan of suffering and savage love.

"Alexandre!"

This one feeble cry contained all the pitiful jubilation of final triumph.

"You are not going to die! You can't possibly die; I don't want you to die! Julie, kill me, but you must live!"

"I am dying . . ."

"And I along with you!"

"What of the child, Alexandre?"

"He, too, must die! Why love him without you?"

"Oh, God! Alexandre, you are mad . . ."

"Yes, I am the one who is insane. I have always been mad . . . I, the madman. . . . Kill me, Julie, and take me along with you!"

"If I only could . . ."

"No, no! Kill me, but you must live. Live for your own self-satisfaction."

"And what of you?"

"Me? Give me death if I am not to belong to you!"

He pressed her still nearer to him as if to prevent her leaving.

"Won't you tell me now who you are, Alexandre?" whispered Julie in his ear.

"Me? Nothing more than just a man—but yours; the man you have made of me."

This word sounded like a murmur from the other side of the grave—as if it had come from the shore of life just as the human craft is sailing off into the mysterious, dark waters beyond.

Alexandre sensed that his strong arms were only holding a lifeless form. The deathly cold of the great final night seemed to settle over his heart. He got up and looked at the now rigid and lifeless beauty. He had never seen her look more beautiful. She seemed to be bathed in the radiance of that light filtering down from the eternal dawn which follows after the final night. Greater even than his recollection of this already frozen corpse he sensed his whole life passing before him like a frozen cloud; this life of his which he had concealed from everybody—even from himself. He even went back over the years as far as his terrible childhood days—to the time when he trembled beneath the pitiless blows dealt by the man who passed as being his father; back to the time when he cursed at him—and when, one night, exasperated beyond all endurance, he had shaken his fist at a figure of the Christ in his little village church.

He finally left the room—closing the door after him, and went in search of his child. The little boy was a trifle over three years of age. The father took him in his arms and shut himself in with him. He began kissing him frantically and the child, who was not accustomed to his father's kisses, who, indeed, had never received a single kiss from him, and who possibly guessed the savage passion flooding his breast, began to weep.

"Keep quiet, my child, keep quiet. Will you forgive me what I am about to do? Will you forgive me?"

Terrified the child remained quiet. He looked at his father who was seeking in his own eyes, mouth and curls for the eyes, mouth and curls of his lost Julie.

"Forgive me, my child, forgive me!"

He closeted himself alone for an instant in order to set down his final wishes, and then he returned to his wife—or to what had once been his wife.

"My blood for yours," Alexandre said to her as if she could have heard him. "Death has taken you away and now I am going to come and get you!" For an instant he imagined that he saw his wife smile and that she moved her eyes. He began to embrace her, to call to her and to whisper terrifying words of tenderness in her ear. But she was quite cold.

When, later on, they had to break down the door of the death chamber, they found him with his arms around his wife. He was pale and deathly cold and bathed in the blood that had been drained completely from him.

NGOMBANI

By PRINCE WILHELM OF SWEDEN

FAR in the heart of the great continent a lonely tomb is slowly crumbling away. It is formed of simple wood, which is now mossy, weather-worn and already dilapidated. The hill near by is buried in high grass, from which a few poppies protrude, like giant strawberries seen against a green meadow. Soon the advancing plant growth will cover the soil in a uniform dress, leaving no trace of anything save a monotonous, luxuriant waste. The space occupied by the tomb is surely doomed to be thus swallowed up, and must utterly vanish amid the green shadows and enveloping verdure. The hill will be leveled, and only a few trees will rise above the grassy surface. No memory will remain of the site marking a heroic deed.

The epitaph on the tomb can be made out, with some difficulty. "Ngombani, killed in rescuing his wounded chief." That is all, but it is sufficiently eloquent. It contains a human fate, and is much better than lofty and imposing marble and granite. It expresses a bare act, unmarred by sentimentality. The man who lies there asked for no explanations, his act being as simple, for him, as the sunrise and sunset. He did only his duty, acting because of the sense of obligation present, at bottom, in every human heart, and because of the motives which are everywhere the same, in the polar ice as beneath the tropical sunlight.

Ngombani's story is not more remarkable than many other histories. It is good to relate against a background formed of the European battlefields, for it should inspire lovely flowers of deeds and sacrifices. And the memory of a dark hero is also worthy of saving from oblivion.

The war had just begun. Its curse had inevitably fallen,

though every nation had hoped to escape the terror. Now it was extending to the dark peoples of Africa, through utter lack of foresight and responsibility in the Europeans who were trying to guide the storm.

The little frontier post just beyond Ruanda was all astir. Couriers hastened up, breathless from their runs, only to be despatched immediately on other errands. An endless defile of perspiring bodies poured continually into the open space in front of the house of the company head. The men had carried their loads of provisions and munitions far beyond the limits of the station, and were returning for more.

In barracks, weapons were cleaned and the saddles and harness well oiled. On the veranda, the chief and his lieutenant were consulting maps spread on a table and feverishly writing orders. News of the military status had arrived the evening before, and now minutes were precious.

"I think everything is ready," finally announced the older of the two men, thrusting his notebook into his pocket. "Sound the assembly, and we can go."

The trumpets immediately pealed out, and the soldiers came pouring from the tents and barracks. Every company was ready to march and the last detail had been settled. The machine needed only to be started. The chief went into the house for the last time, to fetch his pistol and field-glasses. His servant, crouched on the floor, and his pack on his back, was just closing the long portable case containing the field kitchen utensils.

His eye was anxious "Bwana (the chief), a single bearer cannot carry both the kitchen case and the cot, but Bwana will need them both."

"Stupid," replied the captain, "we are in war time, and have no time for rest. The cot will stay here. Ready?"

"Ndio. Everything is packed, and the cameras and films are all ready."

"Well, I'll have no use for them for a few days. But they may as well go along. Give me the key, and start. Don't forget what I have told you. I want you always close by me in the reserve line, even if you have to leave

your regular station. I have given the orders to the corporal. Come along."

Ngombani stood rigidly at attention for a moment, then took the front steps in two leaps and ran at once to his post behind the bugler. The captain immediately posted himself before the assembled troop, gave them the latest news from Europe and gave brief explanations concerning the present expedition.

"You see, boys," he explained, "my native land has been attacked by another country. Your white chiefs have to defend themselves against the white chiefs of the Ruanda district, and of course you have to help your chiefs. If we don't start out now, these other white men will arrive here in a few days to kill you, carry off all your women and cattle, burn your huts and lay waste all your lands. All that must be prevented, and we can prevent it only by meeting these men with weapons in our hands. So we are getting ready for fighting not only because of my orders, but because we must protect our lives and property. You must strictly obey orders, must shoot without getting excited, and do everything just as if you were on the old drill ground here. You must all be brave, and show the enemy how the Congo lions can roar. In this way you will gain the victory and the reward, and the women in the other country will throw flowers to you and regard you as saviors. Do you understand what I have said?"

A chorus of "Yes, yes," was the answer.

"Very well. Right about—march!"

The company immediately began to move forward, toward the frontier. The latter was only a few miles away, and contact with the enemy was established on the following morning. The troop encountered only a couple of patrols, who were driven back after the exchange of a few shots. The patrols sought their main body frantically, heels over head.

The captain was well satisfied with his men. All had gone like clockwork, orders were obeyed automatically and this first small success had put the troop in high spirits. They laughingly considered the whole expedition only an easy and enjoyable little game. Ngombani had stuck to his

chief like a shadow, had fired with the others, had rejoiced with the others when the patrols had retreated, and his belief that his chief had supernatural power to accomplish his ends was now confirmed. This was the third year in which they had been together, and Ngombani had a supreme awe and respect for Bwana Captain.

At first, he had naturally been a little doubtful about this white invasion of his territory, but he had soon perceived that the white chief was a man, just as he was, and his doubt had soon been replaced by the fullest confidence. Ngombani and the chief were now inseparable. They would stick together in bad times as they had in good. Ngombani never entertained the slightest idea to the contrary. When the little skirmish was over, he gently touched the chief's arm and said, "That's the way we always do. No worry, only for Bwana. Ngombani Bwana's shadow. Later we'll divide the loot and go back home."

"This is only the beginning, old chap. We'll have hard luck sooner than you imagine. About the loot, now, that'll be something to talk about later."

Ngombani was not wholly satisfied with this reply. He did not wish to stay away from his wife very long, for one never knows what the women will do when they are left alone. Besides, he loved his home and loved to sit quietly resting in front of his hut, when the day's drills and work were over. He would smoke his long pipe and watch the children at their play, until it was time to go to Bwana Captain's house and arrange the mosquito nettings for the night. Of course, though, the chief's servant must stay with the chief as long as he was fighting the enemy. Since Bwana always knew better what to do than any other man, there was clearly nothing else to do but obey him, and take things as they happened.

The march proceeded ahead, but greater caution was observed and two patrols were sent out to reconnoiter. The company had advanced some little distance into the enemy country, and had to be prepared for any emergency. The troop was only a few miles away from the place where the chief's orders required a halt. The report soon came

back to the rear that the vanguard had encountered heavy fire from a seemingly impregnable hill in front.

"Things are serious now," thought the captain. But he merely gave orders to camp and carelessly lighted a cigarette, as if only the ordinary afternoon drill was beginning. While outwardly quite tranquil, he was really much worried. From the sharp firing, which was heard more clearly every moment, and in which the rattle of machine guns could be made out, the chief realized that there was severe resistance ahead. He carefully looked to ways of strengthening his position. A thin curtain of woods lay between him and the point where the firing was occurring, and behind the woods he had drawn up his reserve line, through which the bullets were whistling.

Their whining and whizzing were in his ears, and splinters were whirling about from the trees in the little grove. The tack-tack of the machine guns ahead told of the death and destruction they were laying about them. They made long furrows in the earth, and when the charge spattered against a stone, a little white cloud of the splinters sparkled in the sun. The captain paid no attention to his impressions at this moment, thinking only of his people and the situation. He was waiting for a chance to survey the ground, for the brush was impenetrable and the trees formed a thick screen. He was much pleased at seeing that the whole company had sought the most effective shelter at the edge of the woods. Orders were faithfully carried out to the last detail, and the men seemed tranquil.

After assuring himself that everything was well, the chief went toward the front and climbed into a tree from which, protected by the dense foliage, he could have a good look at the country about. An open space separated his position from that of the enemy, which apparently consisted of hastily improvised trenches. The chief could make out, with his field-glass, at least four machine guns on the hill, which was distant scarcely three hundred meters. At a point about halfway to the hill, lay a row of felled trees, which it was now too late to remove.

"Three hundred meters's nothing," thought the chief. "We can cross it in a few minutes. The first lap is to the

trees, the second to the hilltop. As soon as the men get their breath, I'll order the charge."

Just then a twig near him moved, and he drew his pistol. But instead of a spy or a crouching leopard, he saw Ngombani, who was sitting on a branch of the same tree and observing the enemy's line as intently as the chief was. "What in thunder are you doing here?" demanded the chief.

The negro almost fell out of the tree. He was so intent on watching the hill that he had not at first observed the chief's pistol. "Bwana gives order stay with him. Bwana climb tree, Ngombani climb too."

"Well, that's all right for the line, but not out here. You stupid fellow, how do you expect to help me, sitting there like a monkey? Clear out—stop, though, wait a bit. Go tell Bwana Lieutenant Bwana order charge in about half-hour. We drive those pigs out from there."

Ngombani slipped down from the tree and the captain followed, after well noting the enemy's position. Now, all this occurred early in the great war, and before any general experience had been acquired about the grave danger of charging against modern gunfire. Trench warfare had not yet been developed. Men were apprehensive of seeking shelter in the earth, and much preferred the old, well-tried methods of fighting. Otherwise, the chief would never have ordered a charge. But he was young and eager to fight, and thought he perceived an excellent opportunity to make a grandstand play. Besides, he had received orders to halt at a point just beyond that hill, and his path was intercepted by the enemy. So, as he saw the situation, the latter called for a march forward.

The bugle blew, his own fire ceased, and his whole company emerged from the woods. At their head was the captain, gun in one hand, pistol in the other, exactly as in one of those old pictures showing scenes of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. Behind the chief came his shadow, Ngombani. Now, though, a serious moment arrived, and an enormous roll of drums seemed to come from the other side. The ground was torn up with bullets. One after another of the charging blacks threw up his hands, as if to surrender, but making only an involuntary move-

ment just preceding his collapse to the ground. A cry rang out now and then. Could the troop ever make the first lap? They finally did, after a delay which seemed an eternity to the captain, and threw themselves down in the slight shelter afforded by the row of fallen trees.

The captain looked about him. Now he could really see what that first hundred meters had cost him. And the worst part of the road lay beyond. The captain counted at least ten killed, whose bodies lay where they had fallen. What might be concealed in the grass yonder? He tried not to think of it, now fully realizing that he had made a blunder. You can't play with death just as you like.

Reports were brought in from the two side wings. More men had been killed than the captain thought. Evidently, the company could not remain where it was. Should the captain go ahead, in spite of everything? Should he assume the heavy responsibility for the loss that would surely occur? It would be madness thus to gamble with his whole troop, and risk annihilation or rout. Retreat might be considered. The captain cursed the enemy, bitterly regretting his orders to charge. But who could have imagined that the enemy were so damned well placed? However, he was now facing the necessity of recognizing his unfortunate position, and of getting out of it in the best way possible.

Near him lay Ngombani, trembling like a birch leaf, his dark skin gone quite gray. "Mbaja sana, mbaja sana," he whined. "It's no good here. I'm more scared than I am when the lions are there. I want to go away. Bwana has made a mistake."

Well, the black was right. His master had certainly miscalculated. "Where is the bugler? Hey, this way the bugler!" The frightened bugler crept out of a little bush near by. "Sound the retreat."

The retreat rang out. The remains of the troop retraced their way over the short distance behind them, and the captain again saw his men falling about him. Those untouched by the lead and iron dashed forward for dear life. Ngombani, running ahead of his master, soon reached

the shelter of the woods. He had never run so fast in all his life. Panting for breath, he threw himself behind a large tree. The chief had ten meters more to cover. He suddenly felt a burning pain in his side. Everything grew dark before him, and he plunged head first into the soft grass. Everything faded in a red mist.

In a moment, Ngombani stood up and looked about for the chief. He could not find him. During that hasty retreat, nobody had noticed what had happened to the chief. All the black could see was his frightened comrades, who were wiping blood and sweat from their foreheads.

Ngombani became very anxious. Supposing something grave had happened to the chief! He cautiously slipped behind a bush, where he could stand erect and look about him. He perceived the chief, who was lying motionless a little way off, his face against the soil. His captain! Ngombani could not leave him lying there. He needed to go to his tent. And the cot bed had been left behind! Ngombani bitterly regretted that he had not, unknown to the captain, bribed a black boy to carry the cot. Then it would have been ready.

Without further thought, Ngombani plunged out from his shelter. He was the only one left to rescue the chief. Before a shot was fired, he reached the chief and began to drag him toward the nearest tree. Then the tack-tack of the machine guns was heard. Bullets were flying all about Ngombani, but he paid no heed to them. For him only one thing mattered. He must get his chief to safety and rescue him from those foreign devils, whether he himself lost his life or not.

He had almost reached the tree, when a murderous shot finished him, and he plunged headlong to the ground, above the chief. They were so near the tree that the young lieutenant, who had come to help Ngombani, could soon drag both men away from the line of fire.

How the lieutenant assumed command, collected the scattered troop, and took, in a few days, the hill which had cost so much, is a tale which belongs to the history of the war. So also is the story of the captain's slow recovery, after a year in the hospital, from the severe wound received

in his lung, and of his brilliant return to the field, where he bore himself so honorably. These things may be learned in histories of the war, which are open to all, but which contain no mention of Ngombani's simple act, the rescue of his chief in spite of the storm of bullets. Few words are ever wasted on the heroism of black men.

But the captain had a monument erected when he learned of what had occurred. Ngombani is sleeping in the sunny land of his fathers, and his slumber is shared by others of his race, whose names are forgotten forever. His name is the only one remaining to represent the black troop who made the unfortunate charge of the deadly hill.

The ancient forests croon their eternal lullaby over the place. The humming-birds glow within the grass, and the long-tailed monkeys chatter in the trees above. Everything breathes of peace and solitude. Nothing indicates that these trees once served to shelter men from death. But if the wanderer in these far regions will only wipe away the moss with his knife, he may be able to decipher the fading words inscribed on the mouldering wood beneath: "Ngombani, killed in rescuing his wounded chief."

NEDJAD BEY TO NIMET HANOUM

By AHMED BEY

I HAVE received the letter you sent me, doubtless for the mere purpose of joking. Before launching out into the matter, pray allow me to put just one question. How many minutes does one require to read through a message of three lines? You will answer: One minute—two minutes, five at the very most.

No, my friend—it took me precisely two hours to read it. If I could be sure that you would not laugh, and would believe me, I would tell you that, from yesterday evening till this morning, I have not taken my eyes away from it. But then, a man dare not always, in all circumstances, tell the exact truth.

This being established, do not please imagine me capable of lying to you!

Also, to my great disadvantage, I fear me I am losing the faculty of lying. I am in the Diplomatic Service and I frequent the best Constantinople society; so you see lying is not only a familiar device to me, but even one of my weapons of success.

Despite this, I find myself incapable of lying when I am speaking to you or, stranger still, when I am merely thinking of you. At such moments I am like the poor peasant who goes before the *Kadi* (judge) to give false evidence. I blush, I stammer, I disgrace myself. . . .

It is not only lying that the sight or the thought of you prevents me from doing. When I look at you or think of you, I find myself stripped of all malice, all uncharitableness, all the petty rogueries that are so necessary to existence. And then there overwhelm me a series of misfortunes and losses!

In refusing me your hand, you are seemingly quite decided to make me unhappy. But that is not the sum

total of the evil you do me. In robbing me of my power of lying and hurting others you alter my habits. You will end by turning me into a "just" man, fit for nothing in this world, whose righteousness earns for him naught but contempt or at best the ironical respect men pay to the defeated in life.

To all these reproaches you can give but one answer and say: "Come, Nedjad Bey, you are surely exaggerating slightly. I avoid you. Despite all your efforts, you only manage to see me two or three times a month. Let us admit that I take up your thoughts five or ten times more. Even so, you have plenty of time left in which to do your lying, in which to do evil unto others, in short in which to devote yourself to your natural occupations."

Yet no, Nimet Hanoum—such is not the real state of things.

There is a popular saying that a man's likeness is as himself. And that, too, is very far from the truth. For how vastly different from yourself is your likeness! Despite all my efforts I cannot drive it from my sight! Believe me, it is far more assiduous, far more persistent than I am myself; if some one shows me the door I just bow and walk out—but your likeness does not—I can beg of it to leave, but it leaves not.

It occupies my thoughts with the same ease, with the same unconventional freedom as if some one had established his quarters uninvited in my grandfather's house. Indeed it reminds me of the lodger who for over ten years has lived at my uncle's house for almost nothing!

Now you will reply: "Tell me, Nedjad, is it possible that I occupy your thoughts uninterruptedly?"

I will confess that there are moments when you are not present to my mind. They are the moments when I am looking at you, speaking to you. And you must admit that I can hardly employ those occasions in any other way.

.

I told you at the outset that your joking little note kept me busy all night and that I read it I don't know how many times. It were a shame were I unable to repeat

it now off by heart, without omitting a single comma. You wrote:

"Nedjad"—The shape this word assumes under your pen resembles strikingly the movement of your lips when you utter my name. I wonder whether my father, when, thirty years ago, he gave me this name, imagined it ever could be uttered with such infinite charm—

"Nedjad Bey:

"You have many times done me the honor of asking me to marry you. Every time I answered you that it was not possible. I retract all I said. You can dispose of my life as you think fit.

"NIMET."

Of course, Nimet Hanoum, I grasped at once that you just meant it as a joke. I am not quite such a fool, as you well know.

How should I take your letter seriously? For a whole year I have pursued you persistently. I have begged you to give me just a tiny little bit of hope. You have steadily denied me even that. "Impossible, Nedjad Bey," you said, "you are young and handsome, wealthy and elegant. But I will not marry you."

And after all this perseverance, after all these refusals, here I receive one fine morning, when I least expected it, a letter in which you write: "You can dispose of my life as you think fit!"

Come, surely it is not possible! Such bliss is not for a human creature!

So, divining the teasing spirit that dictated your words and escaping from the net you have cast for me, I reply to your amiable note my saying: "You have missed your shot, Nimet Hanoum!"

P. S. I did not want to add these lines to my letter. But I cannot resist the temptation to address to you just a tiny reproach. What feminine cruelty drove you to pen that note? True, I did not fall a victim to your heartlessness. See, I will change my habits not one iota, but carry on as if nothing had taken place.

In a short while I will go out. I will take a walk and chat with my friends. And yet . . . it could hardly be the same. Thinking back every moment on your letter, I would sink into thoughts again and say to myself: Doubtless it is a joke, but, supposing for a moment it were true. . . .

Yes, Nimet Hanoum, you are very cruel. Your joke is as merciless as if one were to describe the beauties of nature to a man whose eyes have never seen the sun. In any case, I have no thanks to give you!

NEDJAD.

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FROM NIMET HANOUM TO NEDJAD BEY

Nedjad Bey:

You start your letter with an error. You take it for granted that one cannot lie to a person for whom one has a feeling of unusual interest. You premise that, towards some one loved sincerely and well, one is as innocent as a little child. What a mistake!

I happen to know a young girl who bore a man more interest than was necessary, a man whom she had met somewhere or other. That girl was habitually truthful, but from that moment, she became a liar. Like an actress, she had to play a part, the part of indifference. She was burning with desire to tell her lover, "I am yours," but her mocking lips answered him with a denial. For hours she would lie in wait for the man, and when she espied him, she would turn away her head with disdain.

Whenever they were together, she assumed the attitude of a girl who is utterly heartless. So you see, Nedjad Bey, it is quite possible to lie to those we love best.

The spelling of your name is like its tone. One is as charming as the other. I often repeat it when I am alone. Now let me tell you something: It is exactly one year, twenty-one days and seven hours (you see I have a better memory than you, for I can recall things more ancient than the happenings of yesterday evening), since we were at Naili Pasha's. That is where I first met you.

Nedjibe Hanoum introduced us to each other, and then took the opportunity of drawing me aside into a corner of the room and whispering to me:

"Nedjad Bey belongs to a good family. He has a future before him, is in the diplomatic service and has means. Keep your eyes open, Nimet. He is a good match."

I had no hesitation in following the advice Nedjibe Hanoum so obligingly tendered me. You will doubtless remember that night.

Like a butterfly I hovered around you, with such ardor that all the girls became jealous and made long faces at me.

Three days later, we met again at some other house. Despite the few astonished words we murmured, and the sentiments of gratitude we professed for this happy chance, we knew perfectly well within ourselves that we would meet there. From that time, all went well. We met frequently. And while you were telling me all sorts of pretty nonsense, my thoughts were busy with visions of my wedding dress, of the part of the town in which we would have our home, of the persons whom one must invite to the wedding.

But, a short time later, a subtle change came over me, which was inexplicable to myself. My whole attention, which had first been occupied with the guests, the trousseau and the wedding, began to be absorbed by you. You alone seemed now to have the power to compel my imagination. It was as if some ray of light, slipping through a half-opened curtain, had lit on your face, and brought your features, your eyes, into sharp relief, making all other things around us dusky and indistinct. There came a day when all else vanished from my consciousness but you. I could see nothing but you.

And from that day, I tried to avoid you.

You could not be expected to grasp the motives of this sudden change. You naturally put it down to the feebleness of the impression you had made on me, and every day you exerted yourself to appear more elegant, more attractive. You went so far as to accomplish one or two little acts of obvious heroism. All eyes were on you. But,

in the measure as your fame grew in the drawing rooms, your star paled in my heavens. . . .

Then, two days ago, we were guests of Doctor Refik Bey.

As you are well aware, this dear friend of ours has a way of defraying the costs of his entertainments by securing a few good clients from among his guests. On this occasion, his eye had lit on an Egyptian Princess. After holding a long discourse on the progress of medicine, he requested the audience to go into his laboratory, where he wanted to exhibit himself performing a surgical operation on a little bird. The poor little thing was fated to endure the worst tortures, and then, through some inexplicable magic of science, recover its strength.

The guests all filed into the laboratory to see the wizard at work. You alone remained behind in the drawing room.

"Too faint-hearted to witness the operation?" I inquired. Then you rose hastily, and, assuming your accustomed appearance of health and strength, you exclaimed: "Certainly not! Pray let us go join the rest."

The poor bird, suffering intense agony, had opened its beak in soundless anguish. Just at that moment, my eyes met yours, and I saw a tear trembling there, which you had not succeeded in wiping away quickly enough.

That one little tear . . . that is the key of the whole enigma that seems to puzzle you, to judge from your letter.

A year ago, I wanted to marry you for your riches, for your brilliant future. A while later, I started loving you. For an ordinary husband, it is sufficient that he be wealthy and intelligent.

What a vast difference it makes when one chooses a husband out of love! He must be above all a man of fine soul, of tender heart. To none other could I entrust my life.

You thought it necessary to show yourself as hard as other men, with a heart of stone. You wore a mask that was designed to exhibit you as a proud, cool, cynical man in the presence of pain.

But that little tear I surprised through the mask

revealed the truth. I understood then that you had a fine, a tender heart. But, like all sensitive men, you were hiding the depths of your nature; you were wearing a domino that was to conceal the sweetness of your being.

You see, Nedjad Bey, we women are queer creatures. What neither your handsome looks nor your riches could achieve was done by that one little tear. From now onwards, I can lay my head on your breast in full confidence.

I say it again: You can dispose of my life as you think fit . . . for I have seen the tear in your eye.

NIMET.

SPENT YEARS

By HUSSEIN KENAAN

PERIHAN HANOUM TO KENAAN BEY

YOU will be astonished when you learn the motive which drives me to address you these lines. You are a novelist, and therefore have some knowledge of a woman's soul. You know that a woman can bear all things save that which seems to her to be mysterious, which excite her curiosity and to which their imagination can give no plausible solution.

For some time past, an idea has been haunting me. I think a lot, I tire myself out, but I cannot succeed in solving the problem. So I have decided to write you this letter. The enigma that gives me so much trouble is . . . no! I have not got the courage to tell it to you bluntly. A short prologue is required.

We have known each other for quite a long time, have we not, Kenaan Bey? I remember so well the first day we met. We were living in our villa at San Stephano and I was twelve or thirteen. Escorted by an old servant, I traveled every day by rail into town to go to school. All the girls who lived in San Stephano used to get into the same compartment, and their endless giggling, joking and laughter must have made it quite unbearable to other people who, by some chance, had got into it. They usually took the first opportunity to get out and, I feel sure, must have rejoiced greatly at finding themselves in another coach.

One day I noticed a very fair-haired boy, delicate looking, timid, who slipped into a corner of our customary compartment.

As fearsome as a kitten, he remained ensconced in his corner, not daring to cast so much as a glance at these noisy, mad little girls. My companions started teasing him and invented all sorts of devices for the purpose. . . .

I confess I was the soberest among them. I saw the school-boy blushing and two tears glistening in his eyes, and I was sorry for him. But I could do nothing to protect him.

The boy tried to escape at the first stopping place. With halting footsteps he passed in front of me, and just at that moment my old servant took his hand and halted him, saying to me: "See, this is the young boy, Perihan, son of the Colonel who has rented the villa opposite ours. Speak to him, you ought to become friends."

At that moment you looked just like a bird caught on the lime. So we got to know each other. We went to school together, but our comradeship made no progress. You always were backward with girls. Never did our eyes really meet, and I never heard you speak to me without a slight tremor in your voice.

I was a big girl for my age. A little later I had to start wearing the veil and leave my young playmates to take a seat in the ladies' compartment. Your timidity became worse than ever when you saw me in this new garb, and when you met me in the street, you just nodded and that was all. One day you seemed to be afraid even to do that. So we became strangers to one another again.

It was two years after my marriage to Feridun, and I went to Nichantache to call on some cousins who lived there. My young cousin's fiancé happened to be calling at the same time and Belkis offered to introduce her future husband to me. "He has got a friend with him," she said, "but that does not matter. You will see him as well. Besides, you probably know of him: Hussein Kenaan Bey. You must have read his poems and his witty, beautiful novels."

I was delighted with this opportunity. I don't know quite why I was so particularly fond of this poet's work; perhaps because he struck me as having a deep and subtle spirit. Every time I read something of his I felt a great relief, as one does when gazing up at a summer's sky, deep blue and strewn with stars.

You may remember how utterly astonished I was when we met face to face in the big drawing room. My God! That artist, who writes such profound, such admirable

things . . . is none other than the little fair-haired boy with the timid ways, whom I had known of yore! You started laughing when you noted my amazement, and you no longer showed trace of timidity or self-consciousness. On the contrary, your manner had become confident and your words seemed inspired by a frank, though gentle, gayety. Yes, Kenaan Bey, you had altered a lot. The only thing that remained just as it used to be was your sweet, sad innocence.

And from that day we became firm, close pals. You inspired me with such confidence that I had no hesitation in entrusting you with the most intimate sorrows and joys of my existence. I started following your literary output with keen attention. But, after a time, I noticed a subtle change in your work. Little by little your tinge of melancholy was vanishing, and you became an impetuous, bitter writer.

From that moment onwards, you seemed to take a delight in attacking all that we women hold most sacred. A merciless cynicism for all that is beautiful became your leading trait. You, who had hitherto lived in the seclusion of your dreams as a bodiless spirit, had suddenly descended upon earth and taken up the gage of battle against life. In your fingers, the pen became a cruel whip with which you scourged poor humans with insults and mocking laughter.

A little later, you changed again and became the gay, funny author whom everybody likes. And this evolution in your manner proved very popular. And yet . . . how I preferred the sweet soul-sadness of your earlier works, so faithfully rendered, so fascinating!

But, alas, this change I have just described has not proved to be the last. For some time past now, you no longer deign even to mock men. Poor things, they are no longer worthy even of your trifling, your mocking, your humor! Why all these successive phases? Why all these evolutions, Kenaan Bey? Why have you become a novelist without poetry in his soul, pessimistic, cynical, malicious?

Why have all these stars that shone in your heavens gone out one after the other?

You owe it to me to tell me why, for they were the only rays of light in my dull days and my saddened nights. If you but knew what a hatred I feel for this new Kenaan, merciless and cruel, who has killed the Kenaan I used to know, with his pure, refined, beautiful soul!

Yes, you owe it to me to tell me the truth, for you have hurt me sorely. You have stripped me of my source of comfort.

PERIHAN.

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FROM HUSSEIN KENAAN TO PERIHAN HANOUM

Perihan Hanoum:

I am going to give you an even franker reply than you ask for. If among the things I tell you, there are some that will taste bitter, you will have driven me to it. Perhaps you will be sorry, but what am I to do, since you command me?

Your letter contains certain passages that are infinitely true. Yes, Perihan Hanoum, I have become a man sans poetry, sans pity. I have become cruel and cynical. And I am going to tell you why. But, like you, I lack the courage to plunge straight away into my answer. Like you, I am going to recall the past, and I propose to begin by talking of the day when I saw you for the first time.

In appearance, I was a child, timid, with insignificant ways and speech. But, for my age, my spirit was profound and sensitive. My tender age seemed like the tops of high hills shrouded in mist; it was clouded as with a heavy dream. My young soul felt suffocated under the blows of successive hopes that beat on it as winds on the summits of the crags.

I will always remember that day when I first saw you. Half an hour later, we had become comrades. And this seemed to me an incredible thing. So, since that day, I have never forgotten the sight of your fine, delicate features and your soulful black eyes. For hours, I remained in rapture on your path, but on seeing you from afar, I would beat a precipitate retreat.

I trust, Perihan Hanoum, you will not accuse me of impertinence for telling you all these details, for, alas, they belong to the past. . . .

Years had gone by, and I had lost sight of you. I had forgotten you.

I made a happy debut into literature, and success smiled upon me everywhere. Though I was doing nothing more than just singing out the joy of living that filled my soul. I wrote merely of the love of beautiful things, and yet I began to earn a certain renown in literary circles.

People used often to say to me, as indeed you did: "Kenaan, you have a beautiful, pure soul. Reading you, one has the impression of being steeped in the soft, balmy air of a summer's night; of gazing upon a star-filled sky. In reading your works, where all seems pure and elevated and sublime, one gets to love life."

But soon, to use your own figure of speech, a premature autumn fell on this summer's night, and the stars blinking in the sky vanished one by one.

I had reached the age when one begins to understand the reverse side of men and of life. I first of all witnessed the downcrash of all that life held of sacredness for me, the vanishing of all my faiths. They died, one after the other, before my eyes, a tragic and hideous death. I fought to save them. I fought desperately, but all in vain.

After losing the consolations I had been used to find in religion, I sought others in love of country, in devotion to humanity. Our country was in the full swing of evolution. Splendid words, mighty words, uttered by patriotic lips, flashed through my soul as strokes of lightning.

But I soon came to see that these words were all lies, that these ambitions I had learned to love were but a cloak for unlimited appetite for wealth and power.

Then I turned my gaze upon the men who consecrate their lives to science. Perhaps my troubled soul might find there the rest so ardently sought for. But here, too, I found deception. Science in the hands of these men was degraded into an unworthy instrument.

My last refuge was the friendship of my friends, of all those whom I loved in this life. But they mocked my

innocence, and a scarce hidden smile of contemptuous pity greeted the expression of my ideals.

I have known lips that shed words of hope upon me, and hastened, in my absence, to say all evil possible about me. So I learned this lesson too. Wherever my eyes wandered, I saw nothing but lies and hypocrisy, loose morals, unlimited injustice. These were the marks of Society.

I have known young girls who managed to shed warm tears for two different lovers on one and the same day. I have met mothers who employed their children as bearers of love letters to their guilty lovers.

Do you now understand, dear lady, why I have become the harsh, cynical man I am today? You see, it is not I who went out to attack the ideals and conceptions that are dear to others. I myself was attacked. I witnessed the hands of others tear down that edifice of sane and benevolent optimism my imagination had built up. In that darkest night that swept over my soul and hid from sight the heavens that had once seemed so blue, so pure, only one star still shone undimmed.

That star was you, Perihan Hanoum, with your noble, sublime attitude in face of sorrow. You were not at all happy. You were tied by marriage to a man for whom you had no love. But that was not the sum of your misfortune.

Your husband was deceiving you, wasting the fortune you had brought him, trailing your name as a subject for jokes bandied about by loose women.

You were well aware of it all, and with admirable pluck, you bore up. We were the most intimate of friends, yet I never heard a word of complaint pass your lips. I confess I had a deep affection for you. My sentiments were very close to those of love. I came to be jealous of this last remaining star of hope and virtue that sparkled in the darkened sky. I was jealous of it, despite the tenderness of my heart's feelings for it.

And, alas, one day, that last star went out too.

I saw you with a stranger. You were sitting with him in a closed cab, and a thick veil hid your face. That day,

Perihan Hanoum, I spent on your image that was fading from my consciousness, the last tear my dried-up, cynical eyes could muster.

And now I am satisfied, happy. I laugh, I amuse myself and others. I take my delight in clawing, in wounding, in making blood spring from the wounds I inflict.

So you see, it is not Hussein Kenaan who has killed his soul. It is your own sweet, delicate, loved hand, Perihan Hanoum, that inflicted the fatal wound.

HUSSEIN KENAAN.

**THE YEARBOOK OF THE
CONTINENTAL SHORT STORY
JULY, 1924 TO JULY, 1925**

ADDRESSES OF MAGAZINES PUBLISHING SHORT STORIES

This address list does not aim to be complete, but it is based simply on the magazines which I have consulted for this volume, and which have not ceased publication.

Belgium

Annales (de la Société des amis du) Prince de Ligue, 118, Avenue de Visé, Bruxelles.
l'Aurore, 24, rue Frans Binjé, Bruxelles.
Bataille Littéraire (La), 477, Chaussée de Waterloo, Bruxelles.
Clairon Hardy (Le), 49, Avenue Albert, Bruxelles.
Défense Wallonne, 5, rue de l'Amazone, Bruxelles.
Femme Belge (La), 75, Boulevard Clovis, Bruxelles.
Flambeau (Le), 58-62, rue Coudenberg, Bruxelles.
Horizon (L'), 67, rue Royale, Bruxelles.
Ons Volk Ontwaakt, 127, Boulevard Emile Jacqmain, Bruxelles.
Renaissance d'Occident (La), 95, rue Berckmans, Bruxelles.
Revue d'Actions et d'Impressions, 33, rue d'Albanie, Bruxelles.
Revue Générale (La), 21, rue de la Limite, Bruxelles.
Thyrse et les Chants de l'Aube (Le), 104, Avenue de Montjoie, Bruxelles.

Bulgaria

Democraticheski Pregled, Sofia.
Listopad, Sofia.
Mosaïque de romans contemporains, Sofia.
Oustrina, Sofia.
Slntze, Sofia.
Svobodno Mnemie, Sofia.
Vezni, Sofia.
Zlatorog, Sofia.

Czechoslovakia

Cesky Svet, Karlin, Kralovska, 46, Prague.
Cesta, Marianska 3, Prague.
Dav, Prague.
Host, Prague.
Lumir, Karlovo Ul., Prague.
Moderni Revue, Prague.
Pasma, Brno.
Sever a Vychod, Turnov.
Stesena, Kralovska Trida 66, Smichov-Prague.
Topicuv Sbornik, Narodni tr. II, Prague.

Zemé, Ticha 9, Smichov-Prague.
 Zensky Svet, Marianska Ul. 3, Prague.
 Zlata Praha, Prague.
 Zvon, Vysehrad-Prague.

Denmark

Den Nye Revue, Skindergade 8, Copenhagen.
 Den Nye Tid, Grønnegade 29, Copenhagen.
 Det Nye Nord, Peder Skramsgade 19, Copenhagen.
 Gads Danske Magasin, Vimmelskraftet 32, Copenhagen.
 Illustreret Tidende, Kronprinsessegade 28, Copenhagen.
 Litteraturen, Vimmelskraftet 42A, Copenhagen.
 Nouvelle-Magasinet, Studiestraede 34, Copenhagen.
 Nye Tider, Rømersgade 17, Copenhagen.
 Revue, Skindergade 8, Copenhagen.
 Skaninavist, Tidsskrift Risengade 21, Copenhagen.
 Tiskueren, Klareboderne 3, Copenhagen.
 Virt Maanedssblad, Nørrebrogade 92B, Copenhagen.

Esthonia

Magazines

1. Agu. Tallinna, Pikk t. 2.
2. Kodu. Tallinna, Lai t. 38.
3. Looming. Tartu, Noor-Eesti Kirjastus.
4. Odamees. Tartu, Promenaad 7-a.
5. Sädemed. Tartu "Sädemed."

Publishers

1. Tallinna Eesti kirjastuse Uhisus, Tallinn (Reval).
2. Varrak, Tallinn (Reval), Suur Tatari tän. 1.
3. Rahvatilikool, Tallinn (Reval).
4. Noor-Eesti, Tartu, Rüütli, tän. 4.
5. Odamees, Tartu, Promenaadi tän.
6. Postimees, Tartu, Jaani tän., 11-13.

Finland

Allas Kronika, Helsinki.
 Finsk Tidsskrift, Helsinki.
 Kotiliesi, Helsinki.
 Maaailma, Hameenlinna.
 Nya Argus, Helsinki.
 Otavainen, Helsinki.
 Panu, Porvoo.
 Suomen Kuvaletti, Helsinki.
 Valvoja Aika, Helsinki.
 Vära Kvinnor, Helsinki.

Germany

Allgemeine Rundschau, Munich.
 Berliner Leben, Berlin.
 Die Dame, Berlin.

Deutsche Rundschau, Berlin.
 Dresdener Rundschau, Dresden.
 Dresdener Burgerzeitung, Dresden.
 Die Gartenlaube, Munich.
 Der Herr, Berlin.
 Der Jungeselle, Nollendorfplatz, Berlin.
 Das Leben, Berlin.
 Modenschrift fuer die Elegante Welt, Berlin.
 Preussische Jahrbucher, Berlin.
 Reigen, Berlin.
 Die Novelle, Berlin.
 Sport-Leben, Berlin.
 Suddeutsche Monatshefte, Munich.
 Die Woche.

Greece

Argo, rue de Stamboul 13, Alexandria, Egypt.
 Avghi, Lemissos; Cyprus.
 Diennoisi, 14 rue Gambetta, Athens.
 Erotokritos, Herakleion, Crete.
 Hesperon, Lyra.
 Kerkyraiki Anthologia, Corfu.
 Lesbiakes Selides, Mytilene.
 Moussa, Athens.
 Les Muses, Zante.
 Nea Skepsi, 89 r. Charilaou, Trikupi.
 Nea Zoe, rue de Stamboul 13, Alexandria.
 Pharos, 30 rue Sidi Mitwell, Alexandria.
 Philiki Notairis, 2 rue Dinocrate, Athens.
 Philologika Tetrada, 73 Stea Stoa Phexi, Athens.

Holland

Amsterdammer Weekblad, Kaisergracht 333, Amsterdam.
 Beiaard.
 Buiten, Amsterdam.
 Diersche Warrande.
 Eigen Haard.
 Elsevier's Maandschrift, Amsterdam.
 Getij
 Gids (P. N. K. Kampen & Zoon, Amsterdam).
 Groot Nederland.
 Gulden Winckel, Hollandia Drukkerij, Baarn.
 Kroniek.
 Leven en Werken.
 Mork's Mazijn.
 Nederland, Damrak 88, Amsterdam.
 Nieuwe Gids, s'Gravenhage.
 Onze Eeuw, De Erven F. Bohn, Haarlem.
 Ons Eigen Tijdschrift.
 Op de Hoogte, Klohuwisplesin 5, Haarlem.
 Opgang.

Socialistische Gids, Amsterdam.
 Stem, Arnhem.
 Stemmen des Tijds.
 Vlaamsche Arbeid.

Hungary

Budapesti Szemle, Egyetem Utca 4, Budapest.
 Új Idők, Budapest.
 Napkelet, Dobrenker Utca 12, Budapest.
 Nyugat, Budapest.
 Wok, Andrássy Utca 10, Budapest.

Italy

Il Concilio, F., Foligno.
 Il Convegno, 7, via Borgospesso, Milano.
 L'Esame, 14, via del Monte Napoleone, Milano.
 La Lettura, 28, via Solferino, Milano.
 Noi e il Mondo, 37, via Milano, Roma.
 Nuova Antologia, Piazza di Spagna, Roma.
 Rivista d'Italia, Soc. Ed. Unitas, 12 via Palestro, Milano.
 La Ronda, Roma.
 Il Secolo, A. Mondadori, Verona.
 Il Secolo XX, Milano.

Jugoslavia

LLublyanski Zvon, LLublyana.
 Dom in Svet, LLublyana.
 Missao, Sima Pandourovitch, Belgrade.
 Pouteri, Belgrade.
 Serpskiy Knyszenni Glasnik, Belgrade.
 Raskasnitza, Belgrade.

Latvia

- 1 Izglitibas ministrijas menesraksts. Riga.
2. Kulturas Vestnesis. Riga.
3. Latvijas Gramatrupnieks. Riga.
4. Latvijas Saule. Riga.
5. Latvju gramata. Riga.
6. Muzikas Nedela. Riga.
7. Nakotnes Sieviete. Riga.
8. Ritums. Riga.
9. Skaidriba. Riga.
10. Teatra Vestnesis. Riga.

Poland

Naokolo swiata (Around the World), Warsaw.
 Przegląd Warszawski (The Review of Warsaw), Warsaw.
 Pani (The Lady), Warsaw.
 Świat (The World), Warsaw
 Tygodnik Ilustrowany (The Illustrated Weekly), Warsaw.

Portugal

ABC.

Diario de Noticias Ilustrado.

Ilustracao Portuguesa.

Lusitania.

Occidente, 4 Travessa do Conuento do Jesus, Lisbonne.

Revista Portuguesa, 74, Rua Nova do Amalda, Lisbonne.

Rumania

Cele Trei Crisuri, Aradea Mare.

Cugetul Romaneseo, Bucarest.

Cultura, Cluj.

Flacara, Bucharest.

Gandirea, Bucharest.

Grai Si Suflet, Bucharest.

Junimea Literara, Cernauti.

Ramuri-Drum Drept, Craiova.

Tara Noatra, Cluj.

Viata Romaneasca, Jassy.

Russia

Ral Leonidowa Bartacheff, Harbin.

Bambouk Mamandi, Harbin.

Besseda Epoha, Berlin.

Dal, Tornochovskaia, Harbin.

Dalne Vostochniy Ogonick Dvorjetskiy, Harbin.

Gar Ptitsa Rousskoye Iskousto, Paris, Berlin.

Goloss Emigranta Beyllenson, Berlin.

Gredouchaia Rossia, Paris.

Jili Bili Voevodin, Bizerta, Tunis.

Jivoe Slovo S. Pelikanoff, Warsaw.

Journal Rousskago Vrtcha, A. Nibourg, Berlin.

Karpatskiy Kraiu Av. Popoff, Moutkaiychovo.

Loutckiy Loutckaia Rousskaia Gimnasia, Loutck.

Maiak Pg. Roubnessoff, Riga.

Molodaia Rossia Rousskoie St O. Osch, Berlin.

Niva Maria Zvezdil, Shanghai.

Novosti Literatouri Grani, Berlin.

Okno, Harbin.

Rousskaia Kniga Kritiki Iaschenko, Berlin.

Vera I Jizn Bouketoff, New York.

Vesch Ckifi, Berlin.

Vessioliy Obitalat, Harbin.

Voshod Lenine, Berlin.]

Voskressenie, Paris.

Zveno Vassillieff, Paris.

Volo Rossia, Paris.

THE BIOGRAPHICAL ROLL OF HONOUR OF CONTINENTAL SHORT STORIES

1924-1925

Austria

- RAOUL AUERNHEIMER.** Born in Vienna, 1876. Best known works, *Der gusseirne Herrgott*, *Der Gehimniskraemer*.
- HUGO VON HOFMANNSTAL.** Born in Vienna, 1874. Best known works, *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, *Deutsche Erzaehler*.
- FELIX SALTEN.** Born in Vienna, 1869. Novelist and Essayist. Best known works, *Olga Frohgemut*, *Herr Wenzel auf Rehberg*, *Der Hund Florenz*, *Bambi*.
- KARL SCHOENHERR.** Born in Axams, Tyrol, 1867. *Aus Meinem Merkbuch*.
- ARTHUR SCHNITZLER.** Born in Vienna. Best known works, *Reigen*, *Leutnant Gustl*, *Der Weg ins Freie*, *Casanovas Heimkehr*, *Fraulein Elae*.
- PAUL ZIFFERER.** Born in Bistritz, 1879. *Die Fremde Frau*, *Die Kaiserstadt*, *Das Versunkene Wirtshaus*.

Belgium

- S. DELHAYE.** *The Strange Adventure of Mr. Archibald Hett*.
- M. ROBT. VIVIER.** Born in Chenee near Liege in 1889. *The Uncertain Road*, *The Foreign Field*, *Le Menetrier*, *Pieter et les Nuages*. *Le Menetrier* was awarded the Verhaeren prize.
- JEAN ROY.** *The Phantom in the Hold*.

Bulgaria

- ELINE PELINE (Dmitri Ivanoff).** Born in Bailovo in 1878. He is the narrator of peasant life. Now assistant director of the Sofia library. *Beside the Mill*.
- YORDAN YOVKOFF.** Born in Geravna, Kotel, in 1884. *Eski-Arape*.

Czechoslovakia

- K. M. CAPEK-CHOD.** Born in Domazlice in 1860. The great realist. *Antonin Vondrej*, *Turbin*, *Kaspar-Len-Vengeur*.
- JOSEF CAPEK.** Brother of K. Capek. Author, *Lelio*, *Pro Delfina*.
- VICTOR DYK.** Born in Sopka near Melnik in 1877. Deputy and editor of the magazine *Lumir*. Author, *Konec Hackenschniduv*.
- JOSEPH HOLECEK.** Born in Stozice in 1853. The great writer of rural life. *Nasi*.
- FRANA SRAMEK.** Born in Prague in 1877. Representative of the younger generation. *The Flesh*, *The Silver Wind*.

Denmark

JENS PETERSEN. Byens Born. En Hjemstavnsnovelle.
OTTO RUNG. Sonia.

Esthonia

ALBERT KIVIKAS. Suure vee Ajal.
M. METSANURK. Algu.
RICHARD RHOT. Viimne kevad.
A. H. TAMMSAARE. Matus.
FR. TUGLAS. Poet ja Idioot, Popi i Huhuu.

Finland

FURE JANSON. Born in 1886. Writes in Swedish. Helsingfors, Maskinmänniskan.
ILMARI KIANTO. Born in 1874 in Helsingfors, Disciple of Strindberg. Punainen Viiva.
RICHARD MALMBERG (Gustave Alm). Born in 1877 in Abo. Faengstman.
F. E. SILLANPAA. Born in 1888. Most famous Finnish author. Hurskas Kurjuus, Maan Tasalta, Emat ja poikaset, Elama ja Aurinko, Ihmislapsia Elaman Saatossa.
MAILA TALVIO (Madame Maila Mikkola). Born in 1871 in Petrograd. The best woman writer in Finland. Sydaemet.

Germany

LIESBET DILL. Lothringer Novellen.
FRIEDRICH MULLER. Born in Stettin in 1889. Frau Dr. Heinz, Cameroons Dreams.

Greece

GEORGES DROSSINIS. Born in Athens in 1859. In 1889 founded with M. Politis the magazine Hestia, later the newspaper Hestia, and the magazines Ethniki Agogi and Méleti. National literary prize. Author, Rural Letters, The Garden of Love, Stories, Stories of a Soldier, Ersi, Amaryllis.
ALEXANDER MORAITIDIS. Born in Skiades in 1855. Great short story writer. National literary prize in 1922. Author of Short Stories.
PAUL NIRVANA. Born in 1866 at Marianople, Russia. Officer in the Greek navy. Author, The Shepherd and the Pearls, Street Life, The Author of Love, The Woman's Bible, The Book of Mr. Assara.
COSTIS PALMAS. Born in Patras in 1859. Secretary-General of the University of Athens. Author, Stories, The Death of Pallicare, The Most Noble of All Women.
TERZANI, ANG. Love and Avarice.

Holland

LODE BAEKELMANS. Born in Antwerp in 1876. Athenaeumtijd.

Hungary

ZOLTAM AMBRUS. Born in Debrecen in 1861. The great disciple of French literature in Hungary. "Autumn's Sun."

JOSEF DE BARTOKY. Born in Bekscsaba in 1865. In 1918, under secretary of Agriculture. Author, *Oszi Istek* (Winter evenings), *Telben* (In winter), *Mercsvilag* (The Light of a Candle), *Szivarvany* (The Rainbow).

FERENCZ HERCZEG. Born in 1863 at Versecz. The greatest living Hungarian author. Author, *Fenn es Lent* (Up and Down), *Poganyok* (The Pagans), *Ocskay Brigaderos* (Brigadier Ocskay), *Az elet Kapuja* (The Door of Life).

DESIRE KOSZTOLANYI. Born in 1885 at Subottiza (Szabadka) on the Serbo-Hungarian frontier. The representative of the impressionist movement. Author, *A szegeny kis gyermek panaszhai* (Complaints of a Poor Little Boy), *Negy fal kozett* (Between Four Walls), *Magi* (Magi), *Kenyer es bor* (Bread and Wine), *Bolondok* (The Lunatics), *Bela az egyugyu* (Bela the Fool).

JULIUS DE PEKAR. Born in Debrecen in 1867. A prisoner during the Communist revolution. The president of the *Feher Haz* (the anti-bolshevist society). Author of more than 65 books. *Akom the Eternal*.

Italy

ADA PETTINI. Signor Giacomino's Little Slip (From *Il Primo e L'Ultimo Bacio*).

MILLY DANDOLO. Born in Rome in 1880. Author, *Il Figlio del Mio Dolor*, *Il vento nella Foresta*, *Le Stelle nel Mare*.

HAYDEE (Ida Finzi). Born in Triestin in 1884. Author, *Racconti di Natale*, *Gli Amici de Lucia*, *Paolo Landi*, *Vita Triestina*, *Le Quasi Artisti*.

PIRANDELLO, LUIGI. The Tight Frock Coat.

Jugoslavia

STOJAN V. JIVADINOVIC. The Adopted Waif.

Latvia

JANIS AKURATERS. Born in 1876. He has made his mark in Lettish literature as a novelist as well as a lyrical poet and a dramatist. For his dramas he seeks his stuff largely in ancient Lettish lore and has dramatised the old Lettish and Livland heroes *Viesturs*, *Kaupo*. . . His latest collection of short stories is called *Erosa cilts* (Eros), from which the tale *Death* is chosen. An important essay by Akuraters on *l'Influence de la civilisation française en Latvie*, appeared in the *Revue Bleue* for 1924 (No. 7).

ANNA BRIGADER. Born in 1869. In 1922 she celebrated the jubilee of her literary activity and was made the recipient of many tokens of popular favour, notably of an estate named "*Spriditis*," after the name of the hero of her best-known play. While she has written novels and verse of considerable merit her chief reputation rests on her dramatic works: *Ilga*, *Heteras mantojums*, *Spriditis* (fairy tale). In her *Dzelzs dure* (The Iron Fist) she gives some remarkable descriptions of conditions in Riga in 1918-19, during the German occupation. Author, *The Night Journey*.

JANIS EJERINS. Born in 1891. Brīva Zeme. Der Leirkast en. Der rosige Esel. Leirjekaste.

ROSITIS PAVILS. Author of At The Witch's Tavern.

ANDREJS UPITIS. Born in 1877. During the short reign of Communism in Latvia he was Commissary for Art and Culture in Riga. He spent some time in Soviet Russia, then returned to Latvia and resumed his literary activities. His last work is Die Metamorphosen, from which the short story, The Golden Staircase, is chosen.

Poland

ZYGMUNT BARTKIEWICZ. Born in 1870 in Łódź. Author of short stories of animal life, full of fine sentiment and understanding of the psychology of animals, as well as of the life of the slums of big cities. Great mastery in the psychological drawing of human weakness and of the sadness of every-day life of the forgotten. Souls of Dogs (Psie dusze). Feeble Hearts (Słabe serca). With Blood and Ink (Krwia i atramentem).

WACŁAW GRUBINSKI (pseudonyme Przeboj i wa). Born 23 December at Warsaw: Na Rubieży 1906, Pocalunek 1906, Uczta Baltazara 1906, Pijani 1907, Bunt 1909, Moc Kamienna 1911, O kłatwie Wyspiańskiego 1912, Kochankowie 1915, Djogenez Synopy i Aleksander Wielki albo sławienie prozniactwa 1915, Piekna Helena 1919, Niewierna 1919, Baj-baju-baj 1920, Zabawa 1921, Lenin 1921.

KORNEL MAKUSZYŃSKI. Born in 1822 in Stryj, near the Carpathian Mountains, studied in the high school of Lwów and in the university of Lwów. Author of many short stories, literary sketches and some novels. The most known short stories: Gay Things (Rzeczy wesole). Pearls and Swine (Perły i wieprze). The Game of Happiness (Zabawa w szczęście). Arabian Adventures (Awantury arabskie).

STEFAN ZEROMSKI (pseudonyme Zych Maurycy, Katerla J.) Born 14 November 1864 at Strawczyn. Rozdziobia nas kruki i wrony 1895, Opo Wiadania 1896, Syzyfowe prace 1898, Utwory powieściowe 1899, Ludzie bezdomni 1900, Aryman mści się 1904, Popioły 1904, Powieść o udalym Walgierzu 1906, Echa lesne 1905, Duma o hetmanie 1908, Słowo o bandosie 1908, Dzieje grzechu 1906, Roza 1909, Promień Uroda życia 1911, Wierna rzeka 1913, Sen o Szpadzie 1911, Sen o szpadzie i sen o chlebie 1916, Inter arma 1920, Biała re Kawiczka 1921, Wiatr od Morza 1922.

Portugal

BASTO, CLAUDIO. Born in Lisbon in 1891. Ironia galante, A Linguagem de Fialho, Uma Explicação, Tres Cartas de Camilo, Flores do Frio (A Outra).

Rumania

MARIE, QUEEN OF RUMANIA. Tara mea (My Country). Canduri si icoane din vremea rasboiului. Dal Mio Cuore al loro Cuore.

AGARBICEANU. Transylvanian priest and patriot. Archanghelii. Tefelega. Zidele din urma a Capit. Parvu. Trasurica verde. In intuneric.

SANDU ALDEA. Innurmaplugului. Pe drumul Baraganului. Pe Margineanca.

J. A. BRATESCO-VOINESTI. Born in 1869. Magistrate, then advocate. In lumed dreptatei. Intuneric si lumina. Sorana. In slujba Pacci. The Violoncello.

NINON CARABELLA. Minora's Wedding Day.

N. JORGA. Born in 1871 at Botosani. Master at Bucharest University, and the Sorbonne (Paris), member of the Rumanian Académie, and correspondent for the Institut de France, historian. History of the Byzantine Empire (in English). History of Rumanian Literature (in Rumanian). History of the Rumanian People (in Rumanian). Contes Roumains (in French). L'Art Roumain (in French). La Roumanie Pitoresque (in French). Histoires des Croisades (in French).

M. SADOVEANU. Born at Falticeni. Director of the National Theatre. Iassy. Somii. Neamul Soimarestilor. In delta. La Noi in viisoara. Cantecul amintirii. Pildele lui C. Vichentie. Lacrimile Ieromonahului Veniamin. Oameni si Locuri.

Russia

GORKI, MAXIM. Author Bortzoffian Philosophy.

VSEVOLOD IVANOFF. A writer of Siberian stories. Golubie Peski. Vozvoratchenie Buddia Izd. Russkikh Pisateley. Ognennaya Dusha. Sedmoi bereg razkazi. The Child.

ALEXANDRE KUPRINE. Gambrinus and other stories. The Star of Solomon. The Emerald. The Second Lieutenant and other stories. The Fight. The Change. Yama. Salome and other stories. Seasickness. In the Bowels of the Earth. The most famous of the Russian authors in exile.

ALEX. MAKSIMOVITCH PYESHKOV (Maxim Gorki). Born in 1871. The son of an upholsterer, at an early age Gorki was apprenticed to a shoemaker. After many vicissitudes, he began in 1893 to write. Author of many novels and stories, during the early days of the Revolution, Gorki was the most prominent of the Bolshevik writers. Recently, however, he has left Russia, professing his adherence to the Kerensky cause. Bortzoffian Philosophy.

ALEXIS TOLSTOI. A cousin of the famous writer, Tolstoi is the best known of the Bolshevik authors. Ibycus.

Spain

MIGUEL DE UNAMUNO. Born in 1871. The great radical writer of Spain. Exiled in Paris. Abel Sanchez, Tia Tula, Niebla, Marquis de Lumbria, Nada Menos que Todo un Hombre, Dos Madres. Represents in Spain the influence exerted by Dostoyevski in Russia and Jane Austen in England.

Sweden

PRINCE WILLIAM. Black Stories.

Turkey

AHMED BEY. Nedjad Bey to Nimet Hanoum.

HUSSEIN KENAAN. Spent Stars.

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(This list is necessarily incomplete due to the absence of bibliographies, the difficulties of obtaining replies from publishers, and the extreme difficulties of postal communication.)

INDEX OF AUSTRIAN SHORT STORIES

See Germany

INDEX OF BELGIAN SHORT STORIES

(This list is only partial because many Belgian stories are published in France or Netherlands because of the greater public obtained by their authors.)

- Baert, Rens.* L'Arbre Humilié, Renaissance D'Occident.
Basset, D'Auriac. La Cellule Fleurie, Revue Generale.
Berger, Lya. Dans Les Pins, Renaissance D'Occident.
Betheroy, Jean. Aurelie, Renaissance D'Occident.
Dantinno, Emile. Histoire Du Bucheron.
Darignon, Henri. Les Deux Hommes, Revue Generale.
Delhaye, S. L'Aventure Etrange de M. Archibald Hett.
Dirk Vansins. Frontheimwee Dietsche Warande En Belfort.
Fierens, Paul. Promenade, Renaissance D'Occident.
Germain, José. La Generation Du Feu, Revue Belge.
Görmaere, Pierre. Le Passant, Revue Belge.
Gezelle, Caesar. Drie Gedichten, Dietsche Warande en Belfort.
Grasset, Pierre. Le Torrent dans La Ville, Revue Belge.
Guetens, Jul. Dik Kerkhops zijn dorp stichte, Dietsche Warande en Belfort.
Helles, Paula. Pour Ma Fille.
Hemon-Gilson Yvonne. Le Rossignol de Muraille, Revue Belge.
Herdies, Eugene. La Beauté Trahie, Renaissance D'Occident.
Jadot, J. M. No More Three, Revue Sincere.
Janssens, L. Het Hanten Kino, Janssens, Antwerp.
Koninck, Willy. Pele Mele, Renaissance D'Occident.
Les Emigrants, Renaissance D'Occident.
Leclercq, Jules. Les Paques Du Cid, Revue Belge.
Lecocq, Albert. Le Saul Amour, Renaissance D'Occident.
Mockel, Albert. Les Ailes Mutilés le Flambeau.
Perroy, Marguerite. L'Autre Sang, Femme Belge.
Roy, Jean. Le Fantome dans le Cale, Revue Belge.
Simons, L. Barre Hoogten, Dietsche Warande en Belfort.
Toussaint, Jean. La Maison Perdue, Renaissance D'Occident.
Villartay, Guy. Vieux Jeu, Revue Belge.
Virier, Robert. Pieter et Les Nuages, Revue Belge.

INDEX OF CZECH SHORT STORIES

- Baudysová, Libuše.* Jitrenka. (Roman. Ed. Vilímk, Prague, 1925.)
Beer, Antonín. Episoda a jiné příběhy. (Nouvelles. Ed. B. Kocí, Prague, 1924.)
Beneš, K. J. Dobry clovek. (Roman. Ed. Druzstevní práce, Prague, 1925.)
Blatný, Léo. Povídky v kostkách. (Nouvelles. Ed. V. Petr, Prague, 1925.)
Čapek, Josef. Lelio a Pro Delfína. (Nouvelles. Ed. Aventinum, Prague, 1925.)
Čapek, Karel. Krakatit. (Roman. Ed. Storch-Marién, Prague, 1925.)
Čapková, Helena. O sivé lásce. (Roman. Ed. Storch-Marién, Prague, 1925.)
Durych, Jaroslav. Hadi kvety. (Ed. Obsina, Vyskov, 1924.)
Jerábek, Cestmír. Predzvesti. (Ed. Obsina, Vyskov, 1924.)
Jerábek, V. K. Život. (Mémoires. Ed. Obsina, Vyskov, 1924.)
Jirko, Milos. Vyloupené milování. (Ed. Rosendorf, Prague, 1924.)
Klicka, Benjamin. Vzpoura nosicu. (Ed. A. Král, Prague, 1925.)
Knap, Joseph. Písen na samote. (Ed. Druzstevní práce, Prague, 1924.)
Kopta, Joseph. Tretí rota. (Roman. Ed. Cin, Prague, 1924.)
Kratochvíl, Jaroslav. Vesnice. (Nouvelles. Ed. Cin, Prague, 1925.)
Kubka, František. Fu. (Nouvelles. Ed. B. M. Klika, Prague, 1924.)
Mares, Michal. Oasa. (Roman. Ed. Obelisk, Prague, 1924.)
Maria, Jaroslav. Panstvo v taláru. (Roman. Ed. Obsina, Vyskov, 1924.)
Medek, Rodolphe. Ostrov v bouři. (Roman. Ed. Vilímk, Prague, 1925.)
Míza, V. Námluvy. (Ed. Borovy, Prague, 1924.)
Müldner, J. Blouznění mnicha Innocence. (Roman. Ed. Strom, Prague, 1925.)
Nohejl, Miloslav. Dívka a sen. (Nouvelles. Ed. Storch Marién, Prague, 1925.)
Nováková, Milena. Bez kotvy. (Nouvelles. Ed. Fond Jules Zeyer, Prague, 1924.)
Nor, A. C. Bürkental. (Roman. Ed. Svoboda, Prague, 1925.)
Rais, K. V. Poslední léto. (Nouvelles. Ed. Topic, Prague, 1924.)
Rón, Zdeněk. Za clovekem. (Ed. Fond Jules Zeyer, Prague, 1924.)
Rutte, Mir. Batavie. (Ed. Hamp & Kvasnicka, Prague, 1925.)
Sezima, Karel. Dravy zivl. (Roman. Ed. Vilímk, Prague, 1924.)
Sovář, Lucie. Detká knizka. (Ed. Storch-Marién, Prague, 1925.)
Srámek, Fr. Zasnoucí voják. (Nouvelles. Ed. Borovy, Prague, 1924.)
Storch-Marién, Ot. Vrah. (Roman. Ed. Vilímk, Prague, 1924.)
Teuer, Felix. V Hradbách. (Ed. Druzstevní práce, Prague, 1924.)
Tilchoová, Anna Maria. Dedicové. (Roman. Ed. Borovy, Prague, 1925.)
Vachek, Emil. Manželství s mrtvým a jiná próza. (Ed. Vokolek, Prague, Pardubice, 1924.)
Vachek, Emil. Hodny král a statečný vojin. (Ed. Král, Prague, 1925.)
Vachek, Emil. Svatba v Absinth-baru. (Roman. Ed. J. Elstner, Prague, 1925.)
Vancura, V. Pekar Jan Marhoul. (Roman. Ed. Druzstevní práce, Prague, 1924.)
Vrba, Jan. Selské povídky. (Ed. Otto, Prague, 1924.)
Vrba, Jan. Vysoky anih. (Nouvelles. Ed. Obsina, Vyskov, 1924.)
Zemek, Oldrich. Srdce Nipponu. (Kromeriz, 1924.)

DANISH, SWEDISH AND NORWEGIAN SHORT STORIES

- Aakjaer, Jeppe.* Oplysningens Tjeneste. Et Ungdomsminde. (Holstebro.) Levin et Munksgaard. Min forste Jul. En Skizze. Julen 1922. (Trykt i 225 Ekspl., hvoraf 75 kommer i Handelen 32 S. Holstebro.) Udsolgt Aandsvirkelighed. Taker fra det kristelige Studentermode paa Nyborg Strand 3-9 Juli 1924.
Aanrud, Hans. (Norsk.) Smaafae. Med Tegninger av Gudmund Stenersen 7 Opl. S. ill (Kristiana.) Gyldendal Kart Solve Solfeng(Kristiana.) Gyldendal. Kart.

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- Beckow, Elisabeth.* Tro i Tjenesten. Fortæ lling Oversat af J. Bagger 4, Opl. 19-23 Tusinde 80 S. 18-13 (Næstved 1922) Kristeligt Folkebibliotek. 0,90.
- Bjornson, Bjornatjerne.* Arne Fortæ lling II Opl. (Kristiana) Gyldendal. Arnljot Gelline. Med anmerkninger av Albert Moe. 4 Opl. Skoleutgaver af norske Forfattere ved Joh Hertzberg (Kristiana) Gyldendal. En glad Gut. Fortæ lling. 18 Opl. (Kristiana) Gyldendal.
- Blicher, St. St.* Brudstykker af en Landsbydegns Dagbog. Med Indledning og Noter af Gerh. Hornemann. 2 omarb. Udg. Udg af Dansk lærforeningen i Hundredaaret for Novellens Fremkomst. Gyldendal.
- Blomgren, Josef.* Ellen og Peter Wilhelm. Holbæk 1922 (Kbhvn O. Lohse).
- Boeck, Christopher.* Udv Fortæ llinger. Julens Rose. Fortæ lling Illustr af Ingeborg Hyldahl ill Hus og Hjem's Forlag Ikke i Bogh.
- Bonnelycke, Emil.* Floriane og andre Fortæ llinger. Jespersen.
- Brandmose, Aage.* Muld og Skabner. Danske Fortæ llinger. Ascheoug.
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- Fogtmann, Adolphine.* Fra Christian den Andens Barndom og forste Ungdom Historisk Fortæ lling. Folkeforbundets Organisation. Folkeforbundets Generalsekretariat informationsafdelingen. Genève 1924. Folkeforbundspagten. Folkeforbundets Generalsekretariat informationsafdelingen. Geneve.

- Goldschmidt, M.* Livserindringer og resultater. Oversat til Diddisch af Simon Altschul (J. L. Wulff). Maser (Trykt paa jiddisch) (Wulff). Haandværkerens Kontorbogsamling En Bogfortegnelse med Ovelses-opgaver. Aarhus Teknisk Skoles Forlag.
- Golzche, Ellen.* Singarams Hustruer. Fortælling fra sydindien 2 Opl udg af; det danske Missionsselskab. (Lohse.)
- Hansen, P. C. V.* Amors Luner Smaa Historier om Elskov Officiel og uofficiel S. Gyldendal.
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- Petersen, Jens.* Byens Born. En Hjemstavnsover. Omslags vignen af Møller Olsen. (Kolding U. A. 1922) Forf. Vejstrup pr Sjolund.
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- Udall, Dorette.* Vejledning med Hensyn til Færdsel med Vogne og Cykler m.m. i København. Udg. af. Københavns Politi i 1922 revideret i Maj 1923 og i September 1924 ill Arnold Busck.
- Vollquartz, Ingeborg.* Birthes Breve. Fortælling for unge Piger Jespersen.

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- Ako, J.* Een Striengervecht, U. h. Zweedsch. (Op de Hoogte. 1924. 127-128.)
Alberts, Joh C. P. Willemsparkbuurt. (Kroniek. April 1924.) Credo. (Getij. 1924. 113-115.)
Alexandroff, J. Het galgemaal. (Elsev. 1924. I. 327-338.)
Ammers-Kuller Jo van. Het doornige pad, slot. (Leven en werken. 1924. 289-312.)
Assche, Piet Van. Het verleden. (Ned 1925. 129-135.)
Bashrens, M. C. Kinderraadsels. (NGids. 1924. II. 607-621.)
Baekelmans, L. Athenaeumtijd. (Gids. 1925. I. 341-368.)
Bahr, H. Hemelvaart. U. h. Duitsch. (Roeping. 3e jrg. I. 19-32. 85-97.)
Belinfante, E. De verloren kopy. (Ned. 1924. 937-944.)
Booten, Henri Van. Een wandeling (fragm.). (Ons eigen Tijdschr. II. 193-196.)
Borsl, H. In den Voorvaderlijken Tempel. (Eig. Haard. 1924. 639-640.) De nette manier. (Ned 1924. 598-610.) De geest van de courtisane. U. h; Chineesch. (Ned 1924. 1020-1030.)
Brans, R. Abel Caspar's pelgrimage, verv. Zie Index XV, blz. 67. (Opgang. 4e jrg 614-616.)
Brunning, Henri. De daad. (Roeping. 1e jrg. I. 291-292.) De geboorte. (Id. II. 287-288.) Umwertung aller Werten. (Id. II. 309-310. 385-391.) Het sirkas. (Id. 2e jrg. I. 14-15.)
Brunning, H. Uit: De tocht. (Roeping. 3e jrg. I. 297-299.)
Bukowska, Elae. De ontmoeting. (Elsev. 1925. I. 194.)
Burowska, Elae. De geboorte van Kain. (Elsev. 1924. II. 340-341.)
Burskens, A. Sam's wedervaaen. (VI. Arbeid. 1924. 229-231.)
Buyasse, Cyriel. Van 't negende . . . (Ned. 1925. 114-118.) Uzubupu. (GrNed. 1924. II. 113-148.)
Cannegieter, H. G. Prille vrees en vreugd, verv, en slot. Zie Index XV, blz. 290. (Soc. Gids. 1924. 963-984. 1051-1077.)
Carsen, Goertruida (Mej A. G. de Leeuw). Een misdaad voorkomen. (Eig. Haard 1924. 822-824.)
Chasalle, F. Elegieeb. (De Vrije Bladen. 1924. 228-230.)
Chrystaller, Helena. Van broeder Karel's Kerstmis, vert. d. Albert Kuyle. (Roeping. 2e jrg. I. 148-154.)
Class, E. De droom van Maantje Coene. (Uit Het leven van herman Coene). (Beiaard 9e jrg I. 321-356.) Het leven van Herman Coene, I. (D. War. 1924. 341-355)
Cloordin, V. De jager en zijn alimme vrouw. (Brabantsche St. Hubertussage 1700.)
Cohen, J. Dobbelspel (fragment.) (GrNed. 1924. II. 477-494.)
Coolen, A. Jantje den schoenlapper en zijn Weensch kiendje. (Roeping, 3e jrg. I. 190-204. 243-251.)
Coolen, A. Van het zegenende geluk. (Roeping. 3e jrg. I. 80-82.)
Corsari, Willy. De Meester. (Ned. 1924 895-905.)
Defresne, A. De kast van het verleden, I en II. (GrNed. 1924. II. 505-527. 607-631.)
Denekamp, Lils. Van een prins . . . (Ned. 1924 910-913.)
Deyssel, L. van. King Lear Keyserling enz. (N. Gids. 1925. I. 385-403.)

- Draaiyer-de Haas, Albertine.* Een damespension, verv. (GrNed. 1924. II. 358-368.)
Emma Holm, slot. (OEeuw. 1924. II. 97-126.) De vlucht verv. en slot. (NGids. 1924. I. 587-601.) Een damespension slot. (GrNed. 1924. I. 497-508.)
- Duinkerken, Anton Van.* Op Wandel met den Ravenzwarte. (Roeping. 2e jrg. I. 138-145. 212-223. 275-283.)
- Eaval-Kievits, Maria.* De Paarse Camelia. (NGids. 1925. I. 448-451.)
- Eelssema, W. J. Krieltje.* (Elsev. 1924. II. 55-57.) Oogst. (Ned. 1924. 906-909.)
 Als't voorbij is ... (Ned. 1924. 1007-1016.)
- Engers, A.* Het spookje van den blauwen huzaar en het moederhart. (Ned. 1924. 996-998.) De gele rijder. (Id. 1033-1037.)
- Erdmann, L.* De verlorene, U. h. Duitsch. (Soc. Gids. 1925. 128-148.)
- Ezter, W. Van.* Droom. (Elsev. 1925. I. 128-138.) De vreemdeling. (Elsev. 1924. IX. 346-353.)
- Farai-Kievits, M.* Vergeten leven. (NGids. 1925. I. 335-343.)
- Feen, A. H. Van Der.* Schetsen der oprechte samenleving, I. Belangstelling. (Ned. 1924. 771-780.) I. (NGids. 1924. II. 328-342.) Kassian. II. (NGids. 1924. II. 421-433.) Gerrit Zwaard, slot. (Gids. 1924. III. 159-194.) Het testament. (GRNed. 1924. I. 565-582.) Hanna Berger. (Ned. 1925. 30-38. 154-161.) De idealist. (GrNed. 1925. I. 6-27. 155-183.)
- Ferdinands, P.* Paul Verschure's reis naar Rome. (Ned. 1924. 1093-1122.)
- Francken, P.* Glijdt de gletscher in de diepte ... (NGids. 1925. I. 62-87.) De West-
 Essex. (Ned. 1925. 138-145.) Exempel naar oude trant. (VI. Arbeid. 1925. 56-57.)
- Garf, Kitty.* Dr. Tine Vermonte. (NGids. 1925. 452-459.) Als Boy door België. (NGids. 1924. II. 32-37.)
- Genderan-Stort, R. Van.* Kleine Inez, IV. (Stem. 4e jrg. 813-853.)
- Gevaert, E.* Wat zal god verleenen? (fragment.) (VI. Arbeid. 1924. 329-335.)
- Gijzen, Maria.* Aan de boschdreef, verv. en slot. Zie Index XIII, blz. 390. (Roeping 1e jrg. I. 162-168. 232-239. 297-303. 394-400. Id. II. 12-21. 90-96. 162-167. 248-254. 341-345.) Na Kerremis. (Beiaard. 10e jrg. I. 206-215.)
- Graafland, J.* Avondgrienden. (Roeping 1e jrg. II. 29-33.) De marche funèbre. (Id. 83-87.) Zijn bataljons-commandant. (Id. 225-267.)
- Grietens, J.* Sint Dimina. (Beiaard 10e jrg. 241-257.)
- Groenevelt, E.* Petrus. (Getij. 1924. 68-71.)
- Hallen, E. Van Der.* Van sinte Odrada, verv. Zie Index XV, blz. 261. (D. War. 1924. 980-990.)
- Hille-Gaerthe, C. M. Van.* Levensavond. (OEeuw. 1924. IV. 97-122.)
- Hoogterp, Peet.* Pastels. (NGids. 1924. II. 359-365.)
- Houwink, R. Maria.* (Elsev. 1925. I. 115-127.) Praeludium, I. (De Vrije Bladen. 1924. 176-189.) Simon. (NGids. 1924. II. 486-494.)
- Iersel, Ch. Van.* De nacht der ontmoeting II. (Getij. 1924. 84-89.)
- Jaarsma, D. Th.* Lectuur (fragm. uit, Het gelukkig jaar.) (Elsev. 1925. I. 50-57.)
- Juda.* Uit het leven van een jood. (Beiaard. 10e jrg. I. 25-40.)
- Kaiser, Elsa.* Kleine heilige. (Ned. 1925. 238-246.)
- Knuelder.* De maagd en et kind. (Roeping. 1e jrg. I. 206-207.) De geboorte van God. (Id. 346-347.) Machten. (Id. 2e jrg. I. 84-91.)
- Koenen, Maria.* Anneliebs paaschieren. (Ons eigen. Tijdsch. III. 161-162.)
- Koopmans, Marie.* Van Mulder's keerlken. (Opgang. 4e jrg. 432-438.) In's levens Mei. (Roeping. 1e jrg. I. 337-345.)
- Kroon, Hendrik.* Zita. (NGids. 1924. II. 89-93.)

- Kusle, Albert.** Droomen van het nieuwe tij. (Roeping, 2e jrg. II. 14-18.) Van het heilige huisgezin (frag. Id. 78-80. 219-225.)
- Kuyper, Van Oordt H.** Het goed van Cronaert, I. (Stemm. d. Tijds. 14e jrg. I. 148-185.)
- Labberton, Mien.** Weer thuis. (Oeeuw. 1924. II. 193-202.)
- Laman, de Vries Helene.** Het naaistertje. (Elsev. 1924. II. 398-415.)
- Lantermans, K.** Vat t'r een as't tied is. (Over-Betuwsche novelle.) (Stemm. d. Tijds. 13e jrg. III. 60-93. Leunis de schoenmaker (Over-Betuwsche vertelling.). (Morks. 1924. I. 233, 236, 301, 305.) De vierkantige Sien. (Over-Betuwe.) (Ned. 1924. 611-635.)
- Latzko, A.** Marcia Reale U. h. Duitsch. (Stem. 4e jrg. 461-504.) De rijstkoning, U. h. Duitsch. (GrNed. 1924. II. 283-294.)
- Leeuw, Aart Van Der.** Korte vertellingen, II. Deoude koopman, De minnar. De wenscher. De groote brand. De stad. (Elsev. 1924. II. 190-195.) Korte vertellingen III. De kathedraal. De drie joden. Schoonheid. April. De achtste dag. (OEEuw. 1924. IV. 1-8.) Korte vertellingen; Eenzaamheid. Zinsbegoocheling. (OEEuw. 1924. IV. 262-265.) Id. De droomer. De goudsmid. De huisgeest. De aanblik. Jonker Johannes. (GrNed. 1924. II. 498-504.)
- Levenscamp, A.** Etienna (Getij. 1924. 164-166.) Fleurs du mâle verv. (Getij. 1924. 147-148.)
- Lidt de Jude, E. Van.** Roman gecompriimeerd in een brief. (Ned. 1924. 717-721.)
- Lohmia, Hermance.** Een biecht. (Elsev. 1924. II. 196-202.)
- Loon, H. Van.** De sprong in het duister. (Elsev. 1924. II. 258-263.)
- Maat, Annigje.** De blikken laampe. Giethoornsche schets, I. (Buiten. 28 Febr. 1925. 103-106.)
- Man, Amekio de.** Asschepoester. (Elsev. 1924. II. 30-44.)
- Man, H. de.** Het wassende water, I-III. (Amst. Weekbl. 13. 20. 27 Dec. 1924.) Rijshout en rozen. Tweede boek, verv. (GrNed. 1924. I. 509-524.)
- Mars, Elina.** Joffer Trienette, verv. (GrNed. 1924. II. 165-180.)
- Marsman, H.** De vliegende Hollander. (De Vrije Bladen. 1924. 124-127.) Interieur. (GrNed. 1924. I. 659-661.)
- Meester, J. de.** Kodakplaten. (Gids. 1924. II. 320-327.)
- Meyjerfenna, de.** Ontrouw. (Morks. 1925. 10-19.)
- Moens, Wies.** De Wandeling. (fragment.) (Ned. 1925. 107-111.)
- Molenaar, M.** De Tocht met Rafael, verv. en slot van le dl. Zie Index XIII. blz. 399. (Roeping. 1e jrg. I. 245-250. 401-404.)
- Mooy, Henriette.** Veranderingen. (Leven en Werken. 1924. 349, 458.)
- Mooy, Henr.** Zomeravond. (Leven en Werken. 1924. 395.)
- Moulin, Van Harlingen, E. J.** Hofjes-vreugde. (Ned. 1925. 354-359.)
- Munch, A. P. W.** Gedachten van een verloren mensch. (Elsev. 1925. I. 195-208.)
- Naeff, Top.** Passenten. (GrNed. 1924. I. 449. 483.)
- Nieuwenhuisjan.** Wendende wegen. (Opgang. 6e jrg. 93-96 en volg.)
- Ontaijen, Paul Van.** Vier korte vertellingen. (VI. Arbeid. 1924. 122-127.)
- Pankhuizen, Jr., Jos.** De gelukkige. (Roeping. 2e jrg. II. 124-139. 184-195. 318-330. 379-407.)
- Pellecom, Alcida Van.** Een Vriendschap in brieven, verv. (NGids. 1925. I. 267-275 en volg.)
- Permijs, Martin (M. J. Premela).** Portretten, I: Erik Wijnmalen. (Getij. 1924. 93-95.)
- Peters, A.** De ontmoeting met den schrijver cypriaan. (Morks. 1924. 413-420.)
- Peters, A. H. M.** Narcissus. (Elsev. 1924. 126-130.)
- Peters, A.** Van de liefde. (Ned. 1924. 814-827.)
- Pillecyn, F. de.** De rit. (VI. Arbeid. 1924. 157-167.)

- Poorter, Jo de.* De poppen. (Roeping. 2e jrg. I. 379-383.)
- Praag, Siegfried Van.* De leerares, slot. (Leven en werken. 1924. 625-666.)
- Prins-Burgers, N. M.* De bekeering van een ongeloofige. (Morks. 1924. 625-632.)
- Querido, Is.* De tragische held (Simson) II. (GrNed. 1924. II. 32-52.)
- Raalte, Frits Van.* De versmade Beatrice. (NGids. 1924. II. 434-441.)
- Raalte, Simons H. Van.* Menuet. (Op de Hoogte, 1924. 280-281.)
- Roggeveen, Juul.* Zus en broer. (Elsev. 1925. I. 63-66.) Pieterje. (Elsev. 1924. I. 404-418.)
- Sabron, J.* Postillon d'amour. I. (Ned. 1924. 446-461.)
- Salomons, Annis.* Bijkomstigheden, CLIV en volg. (Amst. Weekbl. 10 Jan. 1925.)
- Salomonson, H.* Behekst, verv. (Ned. 1924. 397-419.)
- Schaaf Nine Van Der.* De eenzame. (OEeuw. 1924. IV. 198-207.) Idealisten. (Elsev. 1924. II. 46-52.)
- Scharten-Antink, C. En M.* Het leven van Francesco Campana, 2e dl. Slot. (Gids. 1924. II. 281-305.)
- Scheirs, J.* De gemerkte. I. (D. WAR. 1925. 56-77.)
- Schmits, Maria.* Een late lentedag. (Ned. 1924. 865-892.) Moeder, fragm. uit Droomenland, I. (Soc. Gids. 1925. 228-253 en volg. Illusie. (OEeuw. 1924. III. 1-14.)
- Schreurs, Jac.* Reflexen. (Roeping. 1e jrg. I. 288-289. 334-336. 391-392. Id. II. 45-46. 97-101. 380-382. Id. 2e jrg. II. 115-118.)
- Schrijver, G.* Grootmoeder's dood (fragm. uit "jobje's avontuurlijke jeugd"). (Stemm. d/Tijds. 14e jrg. I. 44-56.)
- Schurmann, Marguerite.* Incarnations. (NGids. 1925. I. 496-498. Images d'un sou. (NGids. 1924. II. 204-222.)
- Simons, J.* Poppenspel. (Vlaamsche vertelling) I. (Morks. 1924. 457-462.)
- Smeding, Alie.* Als een bes in een hofje. (NGids. 1924. II. 577-594. 753-751.) Geluk-kind. (Ned. 1924. 961-966.)
- Smeets, F.* Daams kerstnacht. (Roeping. 1e jrg. I. 189-199.)
- Springer, Ralph.* Van een dichter die een gewoon mensch worden wou, slot. (Buiten. 7 juni 1924. 270-272.)
- Springer, Ralph.* Van een dichter die een gewoon mensch worden wou, slot. (Buiten. 7 juni 1924. 270-272.) Impressie. (NGids. 1924. II. 595-599.) Spoken. (Ned. 1924. 967-981. 1123-1139.)
- Steynen, Job.* De Marskramer (Opgang 5e jrg. 352-355.) Koning Adelboud heeft hoofdpijn. (Opgang. 5e jrg. 21-24. 44-48. 69-72.) De mislukte rustkuur. (Buiten. 28 juni 1924. 306-307.) HET schandaal van den schoonzoon. (Eig. Haard. 445-447.)
- Stokvis, Benno J.* Gekruisigde slaaf. (Fragm.) (NGids. 1924. II. 461-463.)
- Stoppelaar, R. J. de.* Ald het wintert op aarde. (Leven en werken. 1924. 820-822.)
- Streuvels, Stijn.* N'enn avond in de Meie. (Kroniek. April 1924.) Tristan en Isolde (fragm.) (D. War. 1924. 918-931.) Het lied vanden weemoed. (Beiaard. 9e jrg. II. 180-189.)
- Theniza, Johan.* Een stroeve jongen. (Elsev. 1925. I. 274.)
- Thiry, Ant.* Meester Vindevogel. (Fragm.) (Elsev. 1924. II. 246-257.)
- Timmerman, E. W.* Herinneringen aan mijn oude. Gym: verv. (NGids. 1925. I. 276-285.)
- Timmerman, E. W.* Verv. van No. 1005. (NGids. 1925. 404-414.)
- Timmermans, Felix.* Een ordinaire dag. (NGids. 1925. I. 319-326.)
- Timmermans, Felix.* Het nachtelijk uur. (Opbouw. 7e jrg. 219-220.) O. L. Vrouw der visschen. (D. War. 1924. 801-809.) De feestelijke almanak. (Ons eigen Tidschr. III. 164-168.)

- Toussaint, Van Boelaers F. V.* De Peruviaansche reis. (Gids. 1925. I. 176-196.)
- Treffers, J.* De daad. (Elsev. 1924. II. 115-125.)
- Veen, J. Van Der.* De Amerikaan verv en alot. (Buiten. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 Mei 1924. 206, 207.)
- Veenstra, L.* Het Kerstfeest van de beks. (Ons eigen Tijdschr. III. 33-36.)
- Vegtel, Maddy.* Lie en vier steden? (Elsev. 1924. II. 264-274.)
- Verjans, Jos.* Als metafoer. (Roeping. 1e jrg. II. 400-402.)
- Verdoes, P.* Achter het scherm. (Gids. 1924. III. 75-81.)
- Veth, C.* Harlonie. (Elsev. 1925. 258-262.)
- Vorstman-ten Have, Amy.* Hoospel. (Ned. 1925. 319-329.)
- Vos, Jo de.* Het lange wachten. (Ned. 1924. 686, 706.)
- Voskuil, J. D.* De twee portretten. (Ned. 1924. 646-653.)
- Watch.* De weldaad der verworpenheid. (GrNed. 1924. II. 320-323.)
- Walshap, G.* Belijdenis. I. (D. War. 1924. 682-684.)
- Waals, Laurens Van Der.* Peterke. (Elsev. 1924. I. 341-345.)
- Wasch, Karel.* De loutere bloem. (GrNed. 1925. I. 56-74. 185-204.)
- Wechel, P. Te, Sallandsche.* Schetsen, m. afb. (Buiten. 23, 30 Aug. 1924. 404-406. 417-419.)
- Wesseling, Johan.* Het nieuwe leven. (NGids. 1924. I. 605-627.)
- Wilma.* De muziek van de eeuwigheid. (Stemm. D. Tijds. 13e jrg. II. 88. 101.)
- Witthof, Adels.* In den natijd. (Leven en werken. 1925. 215-220.) Zwerversgeluk. (Leven en werken. 1924. 839-844.)
- Zanten, R. Van.* Op dood spoor. I. (Gids. 1924. III. 291-322.)
- Zernike, Elisabeth.* De grootmoeder. (Ons eigen Tijdschr. III. 65-66.) Een spreekje. (Elsev. 1924. II. 315-336.)
- Zielens, L.* Als lente groent. I. (Ned. 1925. 123-128.)
- Zielens, L.* Van Anne Mieke. (Elsev. 1924. I. 419-426.)
- Zoomers-Vermeer, J. P.* Het Huisje bij de dennen. (GrNed. 1925. I. 337-354.)
- Zurcher, Jr. P. J.* Zijn rozen. (Ned. 1924. 999-9996.)
- Zwaag, G. Van.* De Kaarsies. (Elsev. 1925. I. 277-280.)

ESTHONIAN SHORT STORIES

- Albert Kirikas.* Suure vee Ajal Lomming No. 3.
- M. Metsanurk.* Algas Lomming No. 2.
- Richard Rhot.* Viimne kevad Lomming No. 4.
- A. H. Tammsaare.* Matus, Poialpoiss.
- Fr. Tuglas.* Poet ja Idoot, Popi i Huhuu.

FINNISH SHORT STORIES

- Juho Hoikkaenen.* Jälleennäkeminen (The return).
- Arvi Järvenlaus.* Tunturin, tuolla puolen (Beyond the mountain).
- Joel Lehtonen.* Onnen Poika (The child of Chance).
- M. Pajari.* Me Muojas (We creators).
- P. E. Sillanpää.* Maan tasalta (Close to the soil).
- Maila Talvio.* Sydämet (Hearts).

(In Swedish)

- Gustave Alm* (Richard Malmberg). Fångstmän (Men of prey).
- Fure Janson.* Maskinmänniskan (The human machine).
- Birgit Möller.* Vinddrivna (At the mercy of the winds).
- Ornulf Tigerstedt.* Exercitia.

GERMAN SHORT STORIES

- Adelt, Leonhard.* Lebendiger Stahl; Wegweiser Verlag Berlin.
- Adelung, Burkhardt.* Verlag, Berlin.
- Allenberg, Paul.* "Antinous" Stuttgart Chronos Verlag 75 S.
- Althaus, Paul.* Jack der Aufschlitzer, Gottschalk Verlag Berlin.
- Andersen, H. C.* Drei Marchen Berlin Bruno Cassirer 49 S.
- Anderle, Hamms.* Schmerzhafter Rosenkrauz, Heilbronn Kunter 25 445 S.
- Andras, Hedwig.* Ein Koniglich kind Elberfeld buchh d'Erziehimos Verein.
- Anzengruber, Ludwig.* Der Schaudflech Leipzig Rothbarth 25 965.
- Der Schaetzgraeber Zerbat Eger.
- Annerl Hannerland Samerl Leipzig K. Fleischer.
- Arnorn, Achim V.* Den kraben Winderhoen Breslau T. Hoit 25 78
- Arnold, Frana.* Bach Ernst Die Spanische Fliege Leipzig Richter.
- Arnold, Paul Joham.* Talib, etc. Tubingen A. Fischer.
- Arnold, Paul J.* Ein Kreis Morgenlaend, Fischer, Tubingen.
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- Auerwald, A. Von.* Schritte eines Wanderers Berlin Dahlem, Wichein, V. 25, 905.
- Bajovar, Josef.* Alpeurosen und gentimen Episode Fussen Gruber 25 78 S 80.
- Ballewski, Otto.* Das Somenbad Freien-wald a O Selbstvert 25 405 80.
- Baluschek, Hans.* Grosstadtgeschichten Neuer Deutscher Verlag, Berlin.
- Bannwald, D. Von Oberschl.* Dichten un geschichten Heege Schwiedlitz.
- Barthel, Maz.* Die Knochenmuhle, Neuer Deutscher Verlag Berlin.
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- Bartsch, R. H.* Mosellen wien steyrermuhl 25.
- Bale, Ludwig.* Mondschein und giebeldacher, Osnabruck Kisling 25.
- Baum, Vicki.* Der Weg novelle Stuttgart, deutsche verl Austalt.
- Beam, Walther.* Das Erster Weib Kiepenheuer Potsdam.
- Becker, Ludwig.* Das geheimnis der krachenburg Leipzig Xenien Verl.
- Becker, Karl.* Der Hexenneister von Reichelsheim Friedberg Scribe.
- Behnken, Heinrich.* de erste Gast, Verden (Aller) K. Kahmke.
- Versteckenspeelen.
- Benz, Ferdinand.* Bauern novelle Haibel Regensburg.
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- Bertram Fritz.* Ruberahls Rache Schweidnitz Heege 25, 32 S.
- Birkner, Friede.* Gleiches Blut Rothbarth Leipzig.
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- Blachetta, Wall.* Des kaisers neue Kleider Spiel Frankfurta Buhnevolksbunde.
- Blatz, Curt.* Der grund Haessel Leipzig.
- Blisz, Paul.* Mutter.
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